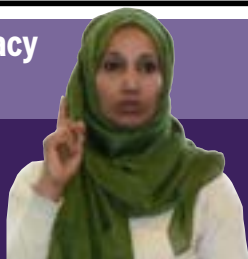


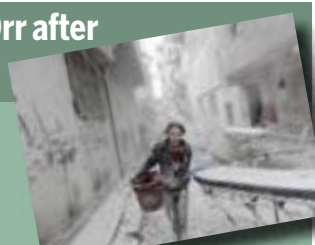
Rabina Khan is running for mayor to defend democracy and take on the Tory cuts>>Pages 10&11

## The battle for Tower Hamlets



Syrian socialist Joseph Daher speaks to Judith Orr after more than four years of turmoil >>Pages 14&15

## Conflict and war in Syria



# Socialist Worker

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## DISABLED MOTHER MADE HOMELESS BY THE CUTS SPEAKS OUT

# TAKE ON THE TORIES



KATH AT the homeless camp in Manchester

**TORY AUSTERITY** is wrecking working class lives across Britain—and their latest assault will only make things worse.

Kath, a mother of one in Manchester, was made homeless after being hit by a string of Tory attacks.

She told Socialist Worker, “When I was 22 I got offered a flat and I ran it for four years. I then had a baby and had to move into a house.

“I became disabled and my benefits started being sanctioned for no reason. My housing benefit got sanctioned also—they call it a suspension of housing benefit.

“And nobody informed me that you could claim housing benefit on no income, so I had no benefits for a very long time. That built up my rent arrears.”

Kath’s son was taken into the care of her mother—and Kath then became liable for the hated bedroom tax.

This snatches housing benefit from people who have “surplus” bedrooms.

“I ended up getting evicted for rent

>>continued on page 3

### AUSTERITY

## Tories attack the poor as more join anti-cuts protests

THE TORIES unveiled plans to push up poverty, increase evictions and sell off services in last week’s queen’s speech.

They also plan to attack union rights and make it even harder for workers to strike.

But thousands of people took to the streets in the wake of the speech to take on austerity.

>>Pages 4&5

### NATIONAL GALLERY



## Rally says no to privatisation and backs rep

NATIONAL GALLERY strikers and 2,000 supporters rallied in Trafalgar Square, central London, last Saturday.

The protest was against plans to privatise jobs at the gallery and to defend sacked union rep Candy Udwin.

Solidarity events took place in Edinburgh, Belfast, Hastings and Cardiff.

>>Page 20

### EGYPT

## Activists call for protests after socialists jailed

ACTIVISTS IN Egypt have called for international protests after leading socialist Mahienour el-Massry and other detainees were given jail sentences last Sunday.

Revolutionary Socialist Gigi Ibrahim said, “We need an international outcry”.

>>Page 8

END AUSTERITY NOW

thepeoplesassembly.org.uk

PROTEST SAT 20 JUNE  
CENTRAL LONDON  
& GLASGOW  
(co-organised by STUC)





## THE THINGS THEY SAY

### 'Straight, professional and likeable'

BBC bore **Nick Robinson** describes former Tory spin doctor **Andy Coulson**

### 'Serious social experiment'

The BBC defends its plans for Britain's Hardest Gaffer, a new programme where the unemployed can compete for a cash prize

### 'I've been told my bag is s\*\*t and I have to change it'

Labour Party leadership candidate **Liz Kendall** focuses on the important stuff

### 'We all want our MPs to be decent & most are. But they REPRESENT voters so that includes few bad MPs to represent bad voters'

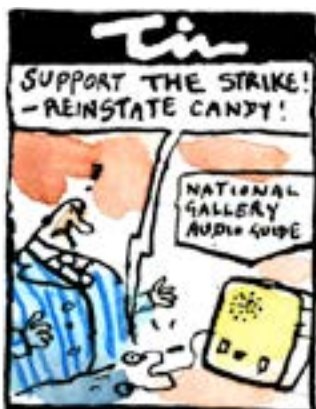
Guardian political editor **Michael White** explains proper politics

### 'Veering close to Marxism'

Former Labour supporter **Mick Hucknall** explains why he dropped them and switched to the Tories

### 'We will offer greater security and opportunity'

Work and pensions secretary **Iain Duncan Smith** explains £12 billion in benefit cuts



# The kind Tory who aided Ukip and a mystery leaflet

**ROYSTON SMITH, the new Tory MP for Southampton Itchen, is a generous man.**

Former Ukip candidate **Kim Rose** claims that two months before polling day Smith handed him an envelope marked confidential.

It contained about 55 pages with maps and local election results broken down by area. It also had addresses for Labour voters who had indicated to Tory canvassers they were likely to support Ukip.

Labour lost the seat to the Tories by 2,316 votes after holding it for 23 years.

Rose says he used the information to instruct his campaign and claims he can thank it for many of the 4,000 votes he took from Labour.

The former Ukip candidate also claims that the new Tory MP handed him a

leaflet template that he recommended Rose distribute. Smith admits to giving Rose documents and advice for his campaign, but denies giving him canvassing data.

He also denies giving the Ukip candidate the anti-Labour leaflet.

The Tories admit that the leaflet came from somebody working in the constituency's Tory campaign.

Rose said he "drew the line" at the leaflet as he said it looked "more like the BNP" and was "totally racist".

A space for Rose—who is Jewish and owns a jewellers—to put a photograph of himself is occupied by a photograph of the Oliver Twist character Fagin holding a jewellery box.

Rose said he found this insulting.

**PLANS FOR Tony Blair to give a speech at a world hunger conference were dropped when organisers refused to meet his £330,000 fee, it was claimed.**

The former prime minister, who last week stood down as a Middle East peace envoy, was asked to address the Eat food forum in Stockholm, Sweden. The eye-watering fee works out at £275 a second for the proposed 20-minute speech.

Blair rich project

**THE ELITE Oxford Union debating society stands accused of racism after its bar offered a "colonial comeback" cocktail with a poster of a slave in chains. Posters for the drink were circulated in the Union's bar before a debate last week on sending money to Britain's former colonies.**

## Cops want to listen to your phone calls

A REPORT by privacy campaigners found cops were making a request every two minutes to access an individual's phone calls or emails.

They get access in 93 percent of cases.

The figures, released to Big Brother Watch under freedom of information laws, found there were more than 730,000 requests for communications data between 2012 and 2014 from forces across the UK.

There were annual increases in

applications in each of those years, peaking at just under 250,000 last year.

The report also uncovered a huge disparity in how many requests were being allowed by each force.

Some, such as Essex, rejected 28 percent of requests but others, such as Cheshire, turned down only 0.1 percent.

Tory home secretary **Theresa May** plans to a law change to give cops even more powers to spy on people.



Police exploring mobile phone use

## Jobs minister used to shill for tobacco

EMPLOYMENT minister **Priti Patel** was part of a team of spin doctors paid hundreds of thousands of pounds to help a tobacco giant counter negative publicity.

Shandwick, a lobbying and PR firm, worked for British American Tobacco (BAT).

Patel was one of seven employees used by Shandwick on the account. One of her jobs was to

lobby MEPs against the introduction of the European Union tobacco control directive, which was introduced shortly after the new millennium.

In a memo dated 14 December 2000, a senior executive within the company, **Andreas Vecchiet**, conducted an annual appraisal of the Shandwick team's performance.

He said, "We have mainly used Shandwick for project-based work relating to the WHO campaign, NGO monitoring".



Priti Patel MP

## Pity the MPs' heavy workload

MPS WILL enjoy a bumper 48-day summer holiday this year.

And there will be plenty of time for tanned politicians to put their feet up when they get back, too.

New Commons recess dates announced by **Chris Grayling** reveal MPs have to be in Westminster for just 69 days between July and December.

It means there are 93 days when they don't have to turn up.



## ZIP IT UKIP!

Some 30,000 British nationals are claiming unemployment benefit in countries around the European Union (EU).

The figures are based on responses from 23 of the 27 other EU countries.

Four times as many Britons obtain unemployment benefits in Germany as Germans do here. The number of jobless Britons receiving benefits in Ireland exceeds their Irish counterparts in Britain by five to one.

## Careful which train tickets you buy

TRAINEE RAIL staff at First Great Western were told not to offer passengers the cheapest tickets, a Channel Four investigation has revealed.

Those learning how to work in stations were told that informing customers of a deal to save them £2 a day travelling from Reading to London would "cause problems" if "everybody did it".

Complications with ticket machines also mean that some journeys can be up to £100 more expensive depending on which train company's ticket machine is used, it emerged.

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# Furious Filipino nurses take on racist Daily Mail

by TOMÁŠ TENGELY-EVANS

**UP TO 600** Filipino health workers and supporters rallied outside the Daily Mail's west London offices last Saturday, to defiant chants of "End racism now".

They demanded the newspaper publicly apologise for publishing a feature headlined "NHS still hiring Filipino nurses" and "It's not racist to worry about foreign nurses."

The racist article came after nurse Victorino Chua was convicted of murdering two patients and poisoning 19 more.

The protest was the largest demonstration by Filipinos in Britain to date.

Protest organiser Tara told Socialist Worker, "When I saw the article, it was just a slap in the face."

"Yet the turnout here shows how many people are angry about it. And with numbers we have power, and with that we have the influence to change things."

Health worker Alberto added, "It's not usual for us Filipino health workers to protest and we normally try and keep our heads down. But we had to do something this time."

## Buoyant

Protesters were in a buoyant mood as they sang the radical Filipino song Bayan Ko.

Alberto explained, "When we had to live under the dictatorship we'd sing this on protests demanding our freedom."

The protesters were mainly from London, but some supporters came from around Britain. Marie travelled up from Portsmouth.

She said, "I'm not a health worker. But I have so many friends and family working in the NHS—and it affects all of us as Filipinos."

The Daily Mail's article on Filipino nurses is part of a broader assault



**TARA** (on megaphone above) and **Alberto** (below, left) PICTURES: GUY SMALLMAN

label Muslims as terrorists."

Unison union member Ray said, "The political parties are making immigration into the main issue."

"The Daily Mail is playing into that. But that's why I'm in the union and here showing solidarity."

Olive added, "We have to put an end to this."

## Privatisations

The attack also comes as the Tories push through more NHS privatisations and budget cuts.

Nurse Javy had come straight off her night shift—and was going to start another shift after the protest. She told Socialist Worker, "We're very tired, but we had to be here."

"I've worked in the NHS for 15 years and it is very stretched right

now, with workloads and stress all going up.

"The Daily Mail says it shouldn't hire any more of us. But without us the NHS couldn't survive."

Antonia has worked for the NHS for 30 years. She said, "Where I work, there's a Filipino nurse on every single ward. In 2000 I went back to the Philippines to recruit nurses."

"I recruited 30 and they're all still working in the NHS."

The NHS was built by migrant workers and wouldn't run without them.

Antonia said, "We're demanding a public apology—and won't stop until we get one."

To keep up with the campaign go to Facebook page Solidarity Gathering Supporting UK Filipino Health Workers

as the Tories ramp up racism and Islamophobia.

Part time NHS worker Olive said, "It is not fair how the Daily Mail labelled us, but they are attacking other groups too."

"They always attack migrants and

## Made homeless by the Tories

●continued from Page 1 arrears," she explained. "That's how I've ended up at the homeless camp."

The protest camp, of homeless people and supporters, was set up in April.

Protesters want to draw attention to the housing crisis and the plight of homeless people.

Kath said, "We want Manchester City Council to review the homeless assessment where they deem someone to be 'intentionally' homeless."

Disgracefully, the Tory attacks on housing and benefits mean



that stories such as Kath's are becoming more common. But the assault has also sparked resistance across Britain—and this has the potential to push the Tories back.

As Kath put it, "We want them to stop the cuts. The housing crisis is getting out of control now. I want the government to be aware that lots of people are standing up for their housing rights and what they are doing is disgraceful."

**Thanks to Caroline Ridgway**

## IN BRIEF

### Cops tasered 14 year olds

LONDON MET police officers used tasers on children, a Freedom of Information request has revealed. The figures relate to 2013 and 2014.

Cops fired tasers at two 14 year olds and also aimed tasers at children as young as 13 and adults as old as 85.

### No charge over custody death

THE CROWN Prosecution Service said there is not enough evidence to bring charges over the death of a man after he was restrained by police.

Student Olaseni Lewis died in 2010 in a psychiatric unit in London. He was restrained three times before he lost consciousness and died.

### Queen grabs yet more cash

THE AMOUNT of public funds going to the queen has gone up to £40 million. The "Sovereign Grant" has risen by more than a third. The law guarantees her 15 percent of profits of the Crown Estate—and a pay rise every year.

### Heartbeat at Hillsborough

AN INQUEST has heard that 14 year old Adam Spearritt regained a heartbeat after being crushed at the Hillsborough football stadium in April 1989. He later died in hospital.

Inquests into the deaths of 96 Liverpool fans who died as a result of the disaster are ongoing.

More at [socialistworker.co.uk](http://socialistworker.co.uk)

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### Can we topple the Tories?

**Sally Campbell** asks why the Tories won  
**Siobhan Brown** on the return of the nasty party  
**Jo Cardwell** looks at the continued Ukip threat  
**Bob Fotheringham** on the rise of the SNP

**Gethin Roberts** and **Nicola Field** from Lesbians and Gays Support the Miners on putting solidarity back into Pride

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## IN THIS WEEK

# 1989

### The tanks roll into Tiananmen Square

ON 3 JUNE, after two months of mass protests, the Chinese army was sent to crush the protest camp in Beijing.

Thousands were killed and many more arrested. A lone protester was photographed standing up to tanks on 5 June.





# Tory queen's speech sees new attacks on the poor

David Cameron opened the new parliament by launching vicious new cuts, writes Sadie Robinson

**THE TORIES** have unveiled plans to push up poverty, increase evictions and sell off more public services—and that's only the start of their assault.

Last week's queen's speech detailed some of the Tories' plans. They included cutting the benefits cap from £26,000 to £23,000, freezing most working age benefits for two years and removing housing benefit from people under 21.

A leaked government memo admitted that the benefit cap cut would push 40,000 more children into poverty. Housing charities warned that the cut would send evictions soaring as tens of thousands more people struggle to pay their rent.

## Young

The Tories also want to snatch benefits from young people. Under 21s who are out of work will only be able to claim a new Youth Allowance for six months—after which they can be forced into “community work”.

It isn't clear if they will be paid for the work.

The cuts are part of the Tories' Employment Bill, which pretends that making life harder for people on benefits will “incentivise” them

## BACK STORY

The Tories introduced 26 new parliamentary bills in the speech

- One bill says unions must get support from more than 40 percent of those eligible to vote in a strike ballot

- An Investigatory Powers Bill offers a “snoopers' charter”

- One bill plans to extend the “Right to Buy” to housing association tenants

- But the promise to abolish the Human Rights Act was not included

to find jobs. David Cameron had the gall to decry the “misery of unemployment”.

He leads a government that gloats it will have sacked 1.1 million public sector workers between 2010 and the end of this parliament.

The measures in the bill will cut £1.5 billion from welfare. But the Tories want to slash a staggering £12 billion—and it still isn't clear where the rest will come from.

The Tories want more privatisation too. The Housing Bill will force councils to sell “high value” council



POLICE TRIED to block people protesting against austerity after the queen's speech in central London

homes and extend the Right to Buy (see page 17).

Meanwhile “coasting” schools will be forced to become privately-run academies and the government will bring in 500 more free schools. A definition of “coasting” is still to come.

The Tories will make it even harder for workers to strike to defend their jobs and conditions (see right).

They will cut even more “red tape”—regulations that protect workers and the environment. They will end new subsidies for onshore

wind farms and give local councils power to block wind farms.

The Tories will invest more in new nuclear energy.

They hope to get away with all of this partly by dividing us. So the Immigration Bill will whip up more racism against migrants. It will make working in Britain “illegally” a crime—and give the government power to seize migrants' wages.

And the Extremism Bill will allow the government to ban extremist groups and close venues “used to support extremism”. It would

also give bosses the ability to check whether someone is an “extremist” and stop them working with children.

Cameron declared the plans would create a “One Nation” Britain. The truth is they will widen the gap between rich and poor and scapegoat the most vulnerable people—if they get away with it.

## On other pages...

New right to buy scheme will worsen homes crisis >>Page 17



Anti-austerity protesters in Bradford

PICTURE: NEIL TERRY

## FIGURE IT OUT

**£1.5 billion**

What the Tories say their savage new bill will slash from welfare

**£12.0 billion**

The total amount of welfare spending cuts they are trying to push through

**£7.0 billion**

The treasury's minimum estimate for the amount of tax rich companies avoid paying each year

## Cruel impact of benefit cuts

THE BENEFIT cuts announced in the queen's speech are a fraction of what the Tories want to slash.

But they will make a major impact on vulnerable people struggling to get by.

Rosa Davies is a disability benefit claimant in Sheffield. She is often in pain and has little energy.

Rosa told Socialist Worker, “From the moment you wake up, you're ill. Doing



Rosa Davies

anything is like a marathon.”

She explained, “Benefit cuts can leave us isolated. You might not be able to manage to walk to see your

friend but you can get a taxi.

“If benefits are cut, you can't afford that any more. You will just be stuck in the house.”

A recent report by MPs linked disability benefits cuts with suicide.

Rosa said, “When the Tories talk about hardworking families I flinch. I want to be a hardworking family but I can't be.”

“We need to stand up against the cuts.”





PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

## Many protests reveal a spirit of resistance

THOUSANDS OF people took to the streets in the wake of the queen's speech on Wednesday of last week.

Up to 3,000 mostly young people marched through central London. The demonstration grew out of protests called by a number of organisations, including the People's Assembly.

Police tried to stop the march, but were swept aside.

Ukip MP Douglas Carswell got a fright when he ran into the protest. He had to be led away by police as protesters surrounded him chanting "racist".

Hundreds of people also joined protests in Leeds, Bradford, Birmingham and Liverpool.

More protested last Saturday during a day of action called by the People's Assembly. Some 500 people demonstrated in Nottingham while 300 marched in Cambridge and up to 500 in Bristol. Protests were also held in Norwich, Hull and Oxford among other places.

In London up to 300 people joined a protest called by UK Uncut.

The protests are building up to the People's Assembly national End Austerity Now demo in central London on 20 June.

School student Ben was on the London protests. He told Socialist Worker, "It was my first demo on Wednesday—and it was great.

"We've got to have more protests. The 20 June is a massive chance to do that. We need as many people on that demo as possible."

thepeoplesassembly.org.uk

## Harder to strike, harder to back political causes

THE QUEEN'S speech included a new attack on workers' rights. A planned Trade Unions Bill would make it harder to strike. It would bring in a 50 percent voting threshold for ballot turnouts.

On top of that it would require 40 percent of those entitled to vote to support industrial action in public services including health, education, fire and transport. Currently workers can strike if a simple majority support it in a ballot.

The bill would also introduce time limits on mandates for action following ballots.

The Tories want to change the political fund part of union subscriptions so that workers have to opt in to paying it.

Trade unions need to organise real resistance to these attacks.

John Burgess is branch secretary of the Unison union in Barnet, north London. He told Socialist Worker, "We need a coordinated strategic approach. We can't rely on the law.

"The union movement has got to respond in the strongest

possible terms—up to and including a general strike."

Ian Hodson, president of the Bfawu union, said, "TUC general secretaries should send a message that we won't accept the removal of any more workers' rights.

"The TUC should call a general strike. If the laws are bad, we're going to have to break them."

## Socialist Worker WHAT WE THINK

# DEMAND MORE THAN THIS LEADERSHIP CONTEST

**M**ILLIONS OF workers look for relief from the Tories' latest onslaught. But activists looking at the Labour Party's leadership election will despair.

Every day the candidates compete to prove they are friends of business. They brush over the plight of the working class people they should be representing as if it is an embarrassment.

So candidate Andy Burnham makes much of his campaigning over the NHS but declares, "In my Labour Party, the entrepreneur will be as much our hero as the nurse."

The bosses' paper the Financial Times is relishing such talk.

An editorial last week said Labour needs to "treat the private sector as a potential ally in the delivery of public services rather than spinning horror stories of profiteering and abuse".

And Burnham has said he would advocate welfare cuts somewhere "in between" zero and the £12 billion the Tories want to drive through.

There is no candidate of the left as none could secure the 35 nominees needed to take part.

Despite this, left Labour MP

John McDonnell argued, "We do have the intellectual resources to dominate the ideological and policy debate in this leadership election." The reality is that the right is shaping the debate.

The Labour left says that "the main forms of effective resistance will be on the streets, in occupations and on picket lines".

Yet this is still in the context of winning people to Labour.

Instead we need to offer a credible alternative to the left of Labour. Right now the left is too divided to provide such an alternative. Socialist Worker has consistently argued for unity to build effective opposition to Tory attacks.

**Candidates brush over the plight of the working class as if it is an embarrassment**

We see the organised working class as having the potential power to defy Tory rule.

The problem is that many union leaders have been unwilling to lead effective action, or have retreated at key moments when strikes could have pushed forward and won.

The priority for socialists today is not picking the best of a very bad lot in the Labour leadership election.

Instead we need to build every fight that can challenge the Tories over austerity, racism, union rights and all the other attacks.

The People's Assembly demonstrations on 20 June will see thousands descend onto the streets of London and Glasgow to march against the Tories.

This can bring together trade unionists, welfare campaigners, school students, anti-racist activists and everyone else who was gutted to see the Tories win.

If they are big it can give confidence to many workers that a fight against the cuts is possible.

The Tories face many problems in pushing through their programme with a small majority.

We need to build the sort of resistance that they can't ignore.

# BRITISH ARMY TERRORISM

**T**HE BRITISH state is guilty of murder and terrorism. A BBC Panorama programme,

Britain's Secret Terror Deals, examined security force collusion with Protestant Loyalist paramilitaries in Northern Ireland.

The British state claimed it kept two warring sides apart. In fact it either allowed or organised the murder of large numbers of mainly Catholics.

Former Northern Ireland Police Ombudsman baroness Nuala O'Loan has said that

"hundreds and hundreds" of deaths happened as a result of collusion.

For example in 1992 Loyalists killed five Catholics in a betting shop in Belfast. Police recovered an assault rifle used in the attack.

Later, when it was required for forensic tests, they said they had "disposed of" it.

It was recently found on display in London's Imperial War Museum.

The government told Panorama the "vast majority" of those who served with the security forces

"did so with distinction".

In reality army terror units set up in the early 1970s were given licence to operate a shoot-to-kill policy.

Others armed Loyalist death squads and supplied addresses and photographs of targets. The murders continued for decades. The officers in charge took their techniques on to the Middle East.

The British occupation of Northern Ireland was repressive and murderous—and all done in the name of defending democracy.

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## ANALYSIS

ALEX CALLINICOS



## Why Ukraine gets an easy ride over debt

**YOU MAY not have noticed, but Greece isn't the only country that is engaged in difficult negotiations about its foreign debt. Ukraine is too. Decades of economic misrule by rival gangs of oligarchs have left Ukraine with a total external debt estimated by the Institute for International Finance at £84 billion.**

Political upheaval and civil war mean the economy has shrunk sharply—by 17.6 percent in the first quarter of this year. According to finance website Investopedia, depending on the estimate of economic collapse you use, the crucial ratio of debt to national income is somewhere between 130 percent and 184 percent. These are Greek-style levels and they are unsustainable.

But the Western-backed regime in Ukraine has received more indulgent treatment than has Greece's Syriza-led government or even its more conservative predecessors. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) announced in February a £26 billion bailout programme for Ukraine. Of course it involves the usual neoliberal conditions—economic “reform” and slashing consumer energy subsidies. But there hasn't been the suspension of economic sovereignty Greece and other indebted eurozone states have suffered.

Maybe this is because the Kiev government has been so forthcoming in opening itself to outside influence without external pressure. Natalie Jaresko, the finance minister, was born in Chicago and used to work for the US Department of State. The economy minister, described as “another former fund manager and investment banker”, is Lithuanian.

There are also a lot of Georgians who served under Mikheil Saakashvili's regime now working in Kiev. The right wing pro-western ex-president of Georgia provoked a war with Russia in 2008 and was voted out of office in 2012. So it's alarming to know that Saakashvili is close to the Ukrainian president, chocolate billionaire Petro Poroshenko. In an extraordinary move, Poroshenko appointed Saakashvili governor of the Odessa region last weekend.

### Thug

The great southern port of Odessa was the scene of one of the incidents that drove Ukraine to war. In May last year 31 pro-Russian protesters burned to death there when the trade union building where they had taken refuge from a right wing mob caught fire. Putting a thug like Saakashvili in charge of Odessa is an act of provocation.

None of this is likely to alter the supportive Western attitude towards Kiev. The IMF package depends on the participation of private sector creditors. Jaresko is demanding that they accept a haircut—that is, a cut in Ukraine's debt to them.

The Kiev government is also advancing what is called the “odious debt argument”. It is denying that it is obliged to pay debts incurred by its predecessors, notably president Viktor Yanukovich, who was overthrown in February last year. Last month Ukraine declared it “has the right...not to return loans borrowed by [a] kleptocratic regime”.

Despite the generally acknowledged corruption of successive Greek governments, this isn't an argument that Syriza has pushed seriously. When governments in the global south make it, there's usually a lot of tut-tutting in the US and other Western countries.

But German finance minister Wolfgang Schauble, who has been unrelenting in his refusal to countenance any reduction in Greece's debt, said after a G7 meeting in Dresden on Friday of last week, “We agreed we must try to support the negotiation of the restructuring of Ukraine's debt, which must be brought to a successful conclusion.”

The situations of Ukraine and Greece aren't exactly the same. Greece's private-sector creditors were forced to take a haircut in 2012. Greece's debt-to-national-income ratio has nevertheless continued to rise, thanks to the IMF's and the European Union's economic mismanagement. But most of Greece's debt is now held by public bodies such as the European Central Bank and the IMF itself.

This may help to explain why the line is much tougher on Greece's debt than Ukraine's since the “institutions” supervising Greece would lose out if there were another haircut. But there's also geopolitics. Ukraine is on the West's side in an inter-imperialist struggle with Russia. And so of course its toadying ministers are getting an easy ride.

# Rotten football system goes further than Sepp Blatter

The outrage of England and Europe over Fifa corruption is hypocritical, writes Dave Sewell

**THE ENGLISH and European football establishments were almost united this week in their desire to remove Sepp Blatter from the head of football body Fifa.**

Even Tory culture secretary John Whittingdale joined in the criticism. Labour leadership hopeful Andy Burnham suggested a World Cup boycott while shadow culture secretary Chris Bryant called for an emergency summit.

One reason Blatter is such a divisive figure is that he is seen as having sidelined countries that traditionally dominated football in favour of newer Fifa members. These include football associations in Africa, Asia and the Caribbean. But this hasn't been good for ordinary people in those countries.

Protests over poor living and working conditions during the World Cup in Brazil last year and South Africa in 2010 showed this.

### Migrant

Qatar was selected to host the World Cup in 2022. Some 1,200 migrant construction workers have already been killed building its stadiums.

Blatter got himself re-elected for a fifth term by Fifa's executive last Saturday despite an intensifying corruption scandal.

The previous day seven top officials were arrested in a dawn raid on the orders of

the FBI. They stand accused of taking bribes. Accusations include a kickback on the construction of a swimming pool in exchange for helping swing key Fifa decisions.

Top British banks Barclays, Standard Chartered and HSBC were looking through their own records after being named as potential channels for Fifa-related bribes.

**FIFA PRESIDENT Sepp Blatter (right) with prince Ali bin al-Hussein (above) Anti-Fifa protest in Brazil (left)**

Blatter faces questioning by Swiss police in a separate investigation into the awarding of the World Cup to Qatar and to Russia in 2018.

But the anti-corruption candidate backed by England's Football Association (FA) and the Union of European Football Associates was prince Ali bin al-Hussein.

He's the son of the king of Jordan who oversees a brutal, corrupt dictatorship.

Al-Hussein is a brigadier in the country's army.

It's no surprise to find that the top of an industry awash with money is also riddled with corruption.

The World Cup is a gold mine for politicians and building bosses who spare no

expense to be selected as the host country.

Brazil's football association embarrassed even Fifa with the gift of £16,000 watches to 28 officials.

In its outrage England's FA also seemed to forget it had been found trying to meet “improper requests” from Fifa officials.

Fifa general secretary Jerome Valcke summed up the rotten system.

In 2013 he remarked, “I will say something which is crazy, but less democracy is sometimes better for organising a World Cup.”

**Got a story?**  
Email ideas to [reports@socialistworker.co.uk](mailto:reports@socialistworker.co.uk)

## Senior figures named as abusers

**THREE WOMEN have come forward to allege that a former Liberal Democrat MP carried out abuse against them as girls.**

Esther Baker waived her right to anonymity last week.

She spoke out about how she was raped by a politician, police officers and others in woods in Staffordshire.

She has also told police that she was sexually abused at a flat in London, which she now believes was in Dolphin Square, south London.

She said a former

Esther Baker

Labour cabinet minister, now dead, also sexually attacked her.

She believes that a Lord and a judge were among her abusers.

She says that she was sexually abused from the age of six to at least 12.

Operation Hydrant was set up by police to bring together all allegations of historical child sexual abuse.

It states that there are 1,433 male suspects of which 216 are dead. Some 506 are unidentified. Some 76 are politicians. **Simon Basketter**

### FIGURE IT OUT

**666**

Suspects in Operation Hydrant are linked to institutions such as hospitals and care homes

**261**

Of these are classified as people of public prominence

**135**

Are from TV, film or radio

**76**

Are politicians, including councillors



# Glasgow strikers reject bosses' insulting offer and vow to fight

Under growing pressure from the all-out homelessness caseworkers' strike, bosses tried to sell a shoddy deal. Strikers spoke to Raymie Kiernan about the next steps in their struggle

**A MASS meeting of striking homelessness caseworkers in Glasgow unanimously rejected an offer from council bosses on Tuesday of this week.**

Bosses had hoped it would end the workers' ten week-long all-out strike.

Striker Mary told Socialist Worker, "There wasn't a hope in hell we would accept the council's divisive offer."

"They want a cut in staff. We're more determined than ever before to keep fighting."

The Unison union members are fighting to be paid equally to other workers, who have the same responsibilities but are paid up to £5,000 a year more.

The Labour-run council bosses were under pressure after revelations about the sorry state of the homeless service.

Unison also threatened to cut off funding to the city's Labour Party if it didn't resolve the dispute.

But the bosses' offer was conditional on losing staff and cutting budgets.

It proposed to restructure the homeless service and create new posts that would put caseworkers onto the higher pay grade.

## Admission

This was the first admission that workers should be on that grade. But it would only keep two thirds of the workers.

Mary said the offer could have been "written on the back of a fag packet".

It shows that the bosses' overriding aim is not to run a public service people need but make workers do more for less.

Mary said, "We haven't enough resources or staff. The service is at breaking point. But council leaders have no idea and a total disregard for homeless people."

"It would just mean more work and more pressure. They need to start listening to us about what the service needs."

Striker and Unison rep Stuart told Socialist Worker, "We were already on our knees before this strike. There's no way we can deliver the service with a third less staff."

City council leaders are only too willing to pass on the cuts from Scotland's Scottish National Party (SNP) government which is, despite its rhetoric, implementing austerity.

Workers deserve better than politicians telling them about the "difficult choices" they face "balancing the books" while the rich are left untouched by the cuts.

The strikers continue to grow in



A MASS picket outside Glasgow City Council headquarters

PICTURE: JOSH BROWN

strength and are as united as ever. They have been invited to speak at council workplace car park meetings this week.

A day of action recently showed how much support they have among other council staff who face the same pressures from cuts.

Mary said, "This is going to happen to everybody at the council. That's what other council workers need to realise—it's time for us all to fight back together."

If another dispute developed at Glasgow City Council and opened a second front, it could just tip the balance and win the strike.

The caseworkers need solidarity more than ever.

Send solidarity messages to enquiries@glasgowcityunison.co.uk  
Donate to the strike fund: Unity Bank, Sort code 08-60-01, Account number 20275792, Account name "Industrial Action—Income" Cheques to Glasgow City Unison, 84 Bell St, Glasgow G1 1LQ

## Council workers resist outsourcing

UNISON UNION members in Barnet, north London, held a council-wide strike on Monday and Tuesday of this week.

They're fighting Tory council bosses' plans to outsource more services and 80 percent of jobs.

Workers picketed key council workplaces and held a march and rally on Tuesday afternoon.

One social worker told Socialist Worker, "This is all tied in with the Tory ideology. But social work shouldn't be subject to market forces—that's why I'm striking."

The assault on jobs, pay and conditions in Barnet shows why



Strikers march through Barnet

every council worker must resist outsourcing, which is gathering pace across Britain.

Unison branch chair Helen Davies (pc) told Socialist Worker, "We hope to strike alongside other workers in dispute when the Tories unleash their budget on 8 July."

Meanwhile, Unite union members in Bromley, south London, have announced a further wave of strikes.

Tory council bosses are driving through plans that will cut the council's directly employed workforce from 4,000 to 300.

Adult services and transport workers are set to strike from 10 to 15 June and library staff from 13 to 20 June. They plan a council-wide strike on 16 June.

Unite has also organised a People and Services First march through Bromley for 13 June.

Send solidarity messages to contactus@barnetunison.org.uk  
Donate to Barnet Unison Industrial Action Fund, Building 4, North London Business Park, Oakleigh Road South, London N11 1NP

For Bromley send solidarity to kathleen.smith@bromley.gov.uk  
Send donations to Kathy Smith, Unite Office, Bromley Civic Centre, Stockwell Close, BR1 3UH (cheques payable to Bromley Unite)

## Drivers can win in Barking

**REFUSE LORRY drivers in Barking and Dagenham, east London, began an eight-day strike last Saturday.**

The GMB union members had already struck for 27 days since March.

They are fighting bosses' plans to slash their pay by £1,000 a year and attacks on their union.

Workers have also raised serious health and safety concerns. Bosses want to halve the "pre start" time, when drivers check their vehicles, to 15 minutes.

Jacob told Socialist Worker, "Management aren't negotiating. But we're determined to keep fighting."

A few workers have gone back to work. But Jacob said, "I could never cross a picket line. You've got to stick together—that's what a union is all about."

Solidarity can win this dispute. Unison and Unite members previously refused to cross a picket line.

This attack is part of the broader assault on local services—other council workers should walk out in support.

Every trade unionist must build solidarity for this dispute. **Tomás Tengely-Evans**

Workers' names have been changed  
Send messages of solidarity to gmb@gmbbarkingb10.org.uk



# Call for protests as Egypt jails socialists

Activists have been imprisoned as part of an Egyptian government crackdown, reports **Judith Orr**

**ACTIVISTS IN Egypt have called for international protests over jail sentences handed down to leading socialist and human rights lawyer Mahienour el-Massry and other detainees last Sunday.**

Revolutionary Socialists Mahienour and Youssef Shaaban along with Loay El-Kahwagy were sentenced to 15 months each after appealing against two-year sentences.

The case centres on a protest about police treatment of a lawyer in an Alexandria police station in March 2013. The police claim Mahienour and other lawyers and supporters stormed Raml police station and assaulted police.

Revolutionary Socialist Gigi Ibrahim was in Alexandria for the hearing to bring solidarity to the detainees with around 100 other activists, both local and from Cairo.

She told Socialist Worker, “The lawyers do their best to fight within the legal system. They will launch appeals. For example Youssef and Loay were not even brought to court to hear their sentences. So that can be challenged.

## Evidence

“But this case is nothing to do with evidence or legal procedure. This is political.”

Gigi said that the judge refused to allow family and supporters into the court when Mahienour was brought in. Officials even tried to stop Mahienour’s family from seeing her.

The court building was full of police and military officers. But supporters refused to be intimidated.

“We pinned up pictures of Mahienour and other detainees on the walls and we had T-shirts with their pictures on,” said Gigi.

Mahienour’s lawyers reported that she was defiant in court. She said, “Let them jail me, we will win out in the end.”

When the judge announced his sentence, she called out as she was being taken back to the cells, “Mubarak jailed revolutionaries and he has been thrown out! Mursi

## BACK STORY

**The military regime in Egypt is stepping up repression against its political opponents**

- It condemned more than 100 people to death by hanging last month
- It has imprisoned many more—including Revolutionary Socialist Mahienour el-Massry
- Egypt Solidarity is calling on supporters to take action. Go to [egyptsolidarityinitiative.org](http://egyptsolidarityinitiative.org)

detained revolutionaries and he was thrown out! Down with military rule!”

Outside supporters, led by Ranwa, Youssef’s wife, took up the chant “the revolution continues”.

Mahienour is a high profile revolutionary activist in Egypt and internationally who has led opposition to every repressive regime from Mubarak to today. She has already served four months in another case where she was arrested under laws banning protests.

She campaigned for the release of many women she met in prison who were there simply because they were poor, including raising money to help pay off debts.

Now women that Mahienour has helped ask her sisters how they can help her.

Gigi said “She has made an impact on so many people, they say to us ‘Mahienour is amazing, she helped my family, what can we do?’”

But she added, “It is tough at the moment with several leading revolutionaries in jail. We need international outcry.

“Solidarity is the only weapon we have. That is what got Mahienour released before. We need it now more than ever.”



**MAHIENOUR'S SUPPORTERS** sit outside the court room holding banners reading “freedom to one of the bravest out of us” and “we don’t like prisons but we don’t fear them”

PICTURE: GIGI IBRAHIM

## Greek government under increasing pressure as bailout deadlines loom

GREECE’S government entered the final month of its bailout extension this week under more pressure than ever.

The coalition led by left party Syriza signed up to a compromise with its creditors in February. This was in exchange for going back on some of its campaign promises and postponing others.

It hoped this would buy time for negotiating a better agreement with the European Union (EU), European Central Bank (ECB) and International Monetary Fund (IMF).

But last weekend prime minister Alexis Tsipras said they were still showing making “absurd proposals”.

The three institutions demand attacks on pensions and workers’ rights, a VAT hike and another £2.2 billion in cuts in return for bailing out debts to the bankers.

This is on top of the privatisations and scaling back of minimum wage and welfare Syriza has already agreed to—and the programmes implemented by previous governments. If it doesn’t reach a new deal before

the bailout expires on 30 June, the institutions are due to call in £228 billion of debt—effectively forcing it to default. But it will struggle to get even that far.

Economy minister George Stathakis insisted Greece would be able to find the £215 million it was due to pay the IMF on Friday of this week. But it also faces deadlines in June to pay another £900 million to the IMF, £2.5 billion to the ECB and £1.86 billion on renewing

treasury bills.

It has already raided pension funds and hospitals’ and local governments’ reserves to make recent interest payments.

Syriza has banked everything on being able to reason with its creditors, and is coming unstuck.

The government nominee to represent Greece at the IMF, Elena Panaritis, stepped down this Monday after 43 leading Syriza members petitioned against her.

Panaritis was a member of the government that signed up to the first bailout.

Finance minister Yannis Varoufakis denied he had appointed her, after he took to Twitter to deny rumours he was about to resign.

Meanwhile workers protested outside the labour ministry last Thursday demanding funding for public services to hire more workers.

There is an alternative to more austerity.

It is defaulting on the debt and leaving the EU on the terms of workers in struggle.

**Dave Sewell**

**Elena Panaritis has stepped down**



**On other pages...**

Joseph Daher on conflict and War in Syria >>Pages 14&15



## Be careful of Lamarck

I LOOK forward to reading John Parrington's book *The Deeper Genome* (Socialist Worker, 16 May). It is a relief that we have moved away from arguments such as a gene for homelessness or for competitiveness.

However, the ideas of the scientist Jean-Baptiste Lamarck that John refers to have some dangerous consequences.

If the behaviour of the parent can be passed on then dynasties of press barons and elitist education can all be justified.

It may be true that stress alters the genome. But it is my position in society that has the greatest effect on my life opportunities.

Pete Wearden  
Bristol

## Don't look to genes

JOHN Parrington suggests that gene editing opens the way to everything from personalised medicine to treatments for schizophrenia and Aids.

But I am not convinced this is a direction we should be looking.

Capitalism already uses claims about personalised medicine and behaviour having genetic links to absolve society of any responsibility.

Where we look for answers to improving people's lives shouldn't be a diversion into the individualised minutiae of genes and switches.

Eradicating poverty and inequality would make the most meaningful difference.

Jill Chanter  
Sheffield

## Socialist Worker unity statement is welcome

I WELCOME the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) unity statement (Socialist Worker, 23 May).

I am not a member of the SWP or any other organisation. But I support the call for left unity in the face of the Tory victory.

We need to unite around fighting racism, sexism and homophobia.

We need to be clear that the interests of the working class are completely inconsistent with those of



# Keep Tories' 'British values' out of the education system

MY 14 year old brother goes to a majority Muslim school in east London. The other day his whole year were treated to an assembly on "British values".

The notion that Britain is somehow committed, as David Cameron claims, to "democracy, tolerance and the rule of law" is completely false.

Britain enforced brutal dictatorships in various parts of the globe for hundreds of years.

It is a country that regularly sells arms to repressive regimes.

And tolerance? Migrants have been scapegoated for everything from taking all the HIV drugs to causing traffic jams on the M4.

People fleeing war and poverty in Africa and left to drown in the

Mediterranean have been called "cockroaches" in a national newspaper.

Democracy and acceptance of others are not British values. They are important to people all over the world.

And they are not the values of the British ruling class. The rights we have—that they are trying to take away—were not handed down to us.

Every gain we have ever got came through fighting. Working class people—black, white, gay, straight, male and female—have fought for the vote, for some semblance of equal rights, for better living and working conditions.

And now the same government

that is attempting to abolish the Human Rights Act wants to present the things we've won as "British values".

Apparently the way to do this is no longer being, to quote David Cameron again, "a passively tolerant society, saying to our citizens—as long as you obey the law, we will leave you alone".

Telling schools they need to promote this rubbish is part of a wider attempt to clamp down on dissent and stigmatise Muslims.

I bet they're not having these kinds of assemblies in all-white schools. It's horrible, it's racist, and should have no place in our education system.

Bethan Turner  
East London

## Nurses say thanks for your support

I WOULD like to thank Socialist Worker for your recent article highlighting the increase in racist attacks towards Filipino nurses.

The organising committee for the Solidarity Gathering Supporting UK Filipino Health Workers demonstration have had positive feedback and

the current ruling elite.

The People's Assembly demo next month needs to be a key step in building resistance and militancy.

We also need a change in the attitude of the unions.

Rather than accepting the restrictions on union activity, we should be demanding the abolition of all anti-union laws

These are difficult times. Old sectarianism won't do.

Steve Gilbert  
Brighton



support since the article. And it has created an more interest towards the protest and issue.

Many of the people affected by this issue greatly appreciate

Socialist Worker for showing what is happening for those who are unaware or wanted to join the demonstration.

Tara Thiyagarajan  
Protest organiser

Just a thought...

## Catholics not all reactionary

THE MAJORITY of Irish people in the Republic identify as Catholic.

The majority of those who voted "Yes" to equal marriage last week were Catholics.

Catholic workers are not as reactionary as we were told.

The Catholic church is everyone in it—not just the backward members of the hierarchy always quoted.

John Mullen  
Montreuil, France

## The issue is Islamophobia

THE TORY government wants to get rid of the Human Rights Act and clamp down on "extremism".

This is a racist attack on every Muslim man, woman and child.

To frame it as a potential attack on the left, as Tim Nicholls did last week (Letters, 30 May) risks avoiding the issue of Islamophobia and the scapegoating of Muslims.

Ayesha Saleem  
Edinburgh

## Root out Fifa corruption

FIVE YEARS ago there were calls by some people in the government to strip the BBC of the right to show games of the 2018 World Cup.

These people attacked the BBC Panorama programme for claiming that three members of world soccer's gaming board Fifa had taken bribes in the 1990s.

We need to root out the corruption that has become endemic in football.

The beautiful game has become ugly. John Appleyard  
West Yorkshire

## Give up on New Labour

IN HER bid for Labour Party leader Leicester West MP Liz Kendall will struggle to sell her credentials.

The New Labour project hit the buffers with disastrous consequences for the party.

But Kendall refuses to acknowledge this.

Instead she chooses to proceed with superficial rebranding.

Subhash Varambhia  
Leicester



Tower Hamlets is set to elect a new mayor on 11 June after a racist witch hunt saw Lutfur Rahman removed. Now Rabina Khan is running to defend democracy and take on the Tory cuts, her supporters told **Dave Sewell**

**I**N THE heart of east London last week, close to the markets and restaurants of Brick Lane, 120 people gathered in the Montefiore community centre. They were mostly residents of the surrounding streets, there to support Tower Hamlets councillor Rabina Khan in her bid to become mayor.

Speaker after speaker got up to talk about Khan's record and the issues at stake in the election on 11 June. It was one of a series of such meetings taking place across the borough.

Khan finished her own rousing speech quoting Martin Luther King, and adding, "The 11 June will go down as the defining moment for democracy in Tower Hamlets—when we will challenge the establishment and tell them we are here to stay."

The election was triggered when, on the basis of contested and flimsy evidence, an electoral court removed mayor Lutfur Rahman and banned the Tower Hamlets First party. This judicial coup is a result of Islamophobia and the Tories' determination to punish anyone who stands up against austerity.

The formal move to throw out Lutfur Rahman was initiated by a leading local Ukup member and an unsuccessful Labour candidate. A local businessman who had fallen out with the council and a former government adviser who is now running for mayor were also involved.

Disgracefully Labour has also gone along with all the attacks.

The people of Tower Hamlets have been a thorn in the side of successive governments.

### Strongest

It was one of the strongest centres of opposition to the Iraq war, and elected George Galloway as an MP on a tide of anti-war campaigning.

They elected Lutfur Rahman as an independent mayor in 2010 after he was removed as the Labour candidate through a grossly undemocratic procedure. And they re-elected him again in 2014.

Under Rahman's leadership the council has done more than any Labour-led authority to blunt some of the Tories' austerity drive. That is why



Canvassing for Rabina Khan



**When I went to Rabina Khan for advice about overcrowding she helped me find a new flat**

Jesmin Chowdhury

the then Tory local government secretary Eric Pickles sent in commissioners to run parts of the borough last year. He then ordered them to take total control just before the general election.

The Tories and the Labour hierarchy are not going to accept a determined, anti-war, anti-austerity council—especially one led by Muslims.

Khan was a key member of Rahman's cabinet, and is now standing as an Independent. Her candidacy is a chance to strike back—and to defend the reforms the council put in place, residents and activists at the meeting told Socialist Worker.

Sutana said, "Because the mayor brought in bursaries and a replacement for the education maintenance allowance that the government took away from students, my son and 800

## HELP RABINA KHAN HIT BACK AT AUSTERITY AND ISLAMOPHOBIA

# THE BATTLE FOR TOWER HAMLETS



**THE SKYSCRAPERS of the City of London overlook council estates in Tower Hamlets (above)**

PICTURES: SOCIALIST WORKER

other young people were able to go to university. There are a lot of poor people in Tower Hamlets, working people and unemployed people on benefits, so this helps them a lot.

"And now I'm supporting Rabina Khan because she stands for the same thing. Whenever people go to her for help, she helps them."

Khan led the council's work on housing. Jesmin Chowdhury said, "She helped me get a new flat when I went to her for advice about overcrowding."

Tower Hamlets council has built more new council homes than any other.

Councillors also hold frequent surgeries, and Khan is

an active campaigner. Ruhel said, "We've had lots of politicians who say they represent the community but who you only see at elections. We prefer politicians who are on the frontline, actively involved on the ground."

"It will also be very good to get a woman elected and break through all the sexism. And Rabina Khan is a champion of fighting racism and promoting diversity in Tower Hamlets."

**D**IANA, A Socialist Worker supporter and Tower Hamlets council worker said, "As trade unionists we have sometimes had to fight against Lutfur Rahman. He has pushed through some of the government's cuts."

"Tower Hamlets First is no perfect model for the sort of left we need. But there can be no doubt that a win for Rabina Khan would be a huge boost to the battle against Islamophobia and austerity. It would be a blow against the Tories and the Labour leadership who have acted appallingly."



**I left the Labour Party because what they did wasn't right. I've seen more change since then than ever before.**

Abdul Noor



A cafe displays Rabina Khan's poster

The mainstream media and politicians have repeatedly tried to paint Tower Hamlets as a backward place dominated by sinister Islamists. And they have smeared ordinary Muslims as political zombies incapable of choosing for themselves.

The electoral court judgement disgustingly argued, "A distinction must be made between a sophisticated, highly educated and politically literate community and a community which is traditional, respectful of authority and, possibly, not fully integrated with the other communities living in the same area".

### Evidence

They've failed repeatedly to back up the smears. A £1 million report by accountants PriceWaterhouseCooper last year found no evidence of corruption. The electoral court found Rahman guilty of the 19th century crime of "spiritual influence" in his election last year, after imams signed a letter supporting him.

But there was no outcry in March when a letter from Catholic bishops was read out at masses across



**This affects the whole working class. The future of Tower Hamlets and the fight against austerity is at stake**

Lucia



## Why I'm standing

by **RABINA KHAN**, independent candidate for mayor of Tower Hamlets, east London

**L**ONDON'S EAST End is full of people with a wealth of experience and ideas to change both their lives and the world. Yet most of them feel—and are—locked out of politics.

In Tower Hamlets we've gone through the years being told what to do by Westminster, with our elections overturned and commissioners installed to run parts of the borough.

Our local political class has lost touch with what it means to represent people. They've spoken for residents rather than with residents, and become mired in vendettas and petty bickering.

The challenges we face are too great to keep going with the politics of the past.

We still have one of the highest child poverty rates in Britain.

Like other councils, we are not allowed to take advantage of cheap borrowing rates to invest in the social housing we need to alleviate the greatest accommodation crisis in living memory.

We might have had 2,500 homeless families if we had not taken the decision to plough money into absorbing the costs of the government's bedroom tax.

I've led in creating more social and affordable housing than in any other borough in Britain. We're the only inner-city London borough in the top ten for getting our young people into university. A recent report credited us with some of the world's best urban schools.

Tower Hamlets has no end of local people willing to stand up for good causes.

### Campaigners

As a councillor I am constantly visited by campaigners—fighting to save a local LGBT pub, wanting fairer leasehold charges, campaigning for a special educational needs unit at their local sixth form college, or wanting more space for cycling and a better deal on road safety.

And when things go wrong, such as the tragedy of local schoolgirls leaving for Syria, we come together across faiths and backgrounds to work out what went wrong and how we can prevent it happening again.

More than anything else, I will fight for a more inclusive and more



**More than anything else, I will fight for a more inclusive and accessible style of politics**

Rabina Khan



Rabina Khan (centre) on the picket line of striking DLR workers last week

accessible style of politics that puts women, families and ordinary people at the heart of policy and decision-making.

The days of iron walls and political cliques that plagued this borough for decades before any of us were on the scene will be over.

### Housing

We need to continue creating social housing and ensure that developers are made to put something more into the community than another pile of luxury flats.

We need to make sure that the arts and culture are preserved and encouraged to flourish.

We need to stand with vulnerable people, whether it's over the scrapping of the Independent Living Fund for disabled people, helping working mothers such as myself with childcare costs, or standing up against a rising tide of racism and xenophobia.

And we need to create decent jobs and decent wages.

I will work with a broad coalition. I will not shut down ideas because they come from people I have political differences with. I will work closely with the commissioners to ensure the issues identified in last year's auditors' report are addressed.

But at the same time, I will make sure that the council is run for the benefit of East Enders—not Whitehall bureaucrats.

And I will encourage everyone who is physically able to vote in person, not by postal ballot, because democracy is precious and the people of Tower Hamlets must show their strength at the ballot box.

I like to think that fixing everyday issues can be part of a bigger picture. We have the power to do politics differently.

In Scotland we've seen how the main parties have been left behind, and for the first time in a generation people feel energised by politics.

Here, we have a chance to focus on the future. Over 250,000 people call Tower Hamlets home. I think all of us deserve more, and that's why I want to be your next mayor.

This is a shortened version of a statement on Rabina Khan's website. Read the full version at [rabina4mayor.com/why-im-standing.html](http://rabina4mayor.com/why-im-standing.html)



## WHAT WE STAND FOR

These are the core politics of the Socialist Workers Party.

### INDEPENDENT WORKING CLASS ACTION

Under capitalism workers' labour creates all profit. A socialist society can only be constructed when the working class seizes control of the means of production and democratically plans how they are used.

### REVOLUTION NOT REFORM

The present system cannot be patched up or reformed as the established Labour and trade union leaders say.

It has to be overthrown. Capitalism systematically degrades the natural world. Ending environmental crisis means creating a new society.

### THERE IS NO PARLIAMENTARY ROAD

The structures of the present parliament, army, police and judiciary cannot be taken over and used by the working class. They grew up under capitalism and are designed to protect the ruling class against the workers.

The working class needs an entirely different kind of state — a workers' state based upon councils of workers' delegates and a workers' militia.

At most parliamentary activity can be used to make propaganda against the present system.

Only the mass action of the workers themselves can destroy the system.

### INTERNATIONALISM

The struggle for socialism is part of a worldwide struggle. We campaign for solidarity with workers in other countries.

We oppose everything which turns workers from one country against those from other countries.

We oppose racism and imperialism. We oppose all immigration controls.

We support the right of black people and other oppressed groups to organise their own defence. We support all genuine national liberation movements.

The experience of Russia demonstrates that a socialist revolution cannot survive in isolation in one country.

In Russia the result was state capitalism, not socialism. In Eastern Europe and China a similar system was later established by Stalinist parties. We support the struggle of workers in these countries against both private and state capitalism.

We are for real social, economic and political equality of women. We are for an end to all forms of discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

We defend the right of believers to practise their religion without state interference.

### THE REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

To achieve socialism the most militant sections of the working class have to be organised into a revolutionary socialist party.

Such a party can only be built by activity in the mass organisations of the working class.

We have to prove in practice to other workers that reformist leaders and reformist ideas are opposed to their own interests. We have to build a rank and file movement within the unions.

To join us, turn to page 16 or go to [www.swp.org.uk](http://www.swp.org.uk) or phone 020 7819 1170 for more information

## { SOCIALIST WORKER } BRANCH MEETINGS

Weekly meetings to discuss political issues and our local interventions. All welcome.

### BARNSELEY

#### A world to win

Wed 10 Jun, 6.30pm,  
Barnsley Civic Theatre,  
Hanson St, S70 2HZ

### BIRMINGHAM: CITY CENTRE

#### Should the unions break with the Labour Party?

Wed 10 Jun, 7pm,  
Birmingham LGBT Centre,  
38/40 Holloway Circus,  
B1 1EQ

### BRIGHTON

#### Is the Green Party a genuine left alternative?

Wed 10 Jun, 7.30pm,  
Friends Meeting House,  
Ship St, BN1 1AF

### BRISTOL: SOUTH

#### Is Marxism still relevant today?

Wed 10 Jun, 7.30pm,  
YHA,  
14 Narrow Quay,  
BS1 4QA

### CARDIFF

#### Does the media control our minds?

Wed 10 Jun, 7.30pm,  
Cathays Community Centre,  
Cathays Terrace,  
CF24 4HX

### CHELMSFORD

#### What are the roots of terrorism?

Thu 18 Jun, 7.30pm,  
Friends Meeting House,  
Rainsford Rd,  
CM1 2QL

### CHESTERFIELD

#### What is the alternative to austerity?

Thu 11 Jun, 7.30pm,  
Chesterfield Library (please enter via Cafe Browser),  
New Beetwell St, S40 1QL

### COLCHESTER

#### Putin, Ukraine and the West — are we heading for another Cold War?

Tue 9 Jun, 7.30pm,  
The Odd One Out,  
28 Mersea Rd, CO2 7ET

### DERBY

#### Were the Liberals always yellow Tories? A history of the Lib Dems

Thu 11 Jun, 7pm  
West End Community Centre,  
Mackworth Rd (next to Britannia Mill), DE22 3BL

### DONCASTER

#### The US — racism, the police and resistance

Wed 10 Jun, 7.30pm,  
Women's Centre,  
21 Cleveland St,  
DN1 3EH

### DUNDEE

#### Race and racism today

Wed 10 Jun, 7.30pm,  
Dundee Voluntary Action,  
10 Constitution Rd,  
DD1 1LL

### EDINBURGH

#### Bolshevism in the 21st century

Wed 10 Jun, 7.30pm,  
Friends Meeting House,  
7 Victoria Terrace,  
EH1 2JL

### EXETER

#### Migrant lives matter — stop the slaughter in the Mediterranean

Thu 18 Jun, 7pm,  
New Horizon Cafe,  
47 Longbrook St,  
EX4 6AW

### GLASGOW: SOUTH

#### Who was Lenin?

Thu 11 Jun, 7.30pm,  
Govanhill Baths,  
99 Calder St,  
G42 7RA

### HARLOW

#### Is Scotland more radical than England?

Thu 11 Jun, 7.30pm,  
Friends Meeting House,  
1 Church Leys,  
CM18 6BX

### LEEDS: CITY CENTRE

#### The housing crisis — where are we all going to live?

Thu 11 Jun, 7pm,  
The Swarthmore Education Centre,  
2-7 Woodhouse Square,  
LS3 1AD

### LIVERPOOL

#### Islamophobia today — racism and the politics of fear

Thu 11 Jun, 7pm,  
The Brink Cafe,  
21 Parr St (near Concert Square),  
Liverpool L1 4JN

SOCIALIST WORKER BRANCH MEETINGS

TWO OF the contenders for the Labour leadership Andy Burnham and Yvette Cooper

# Is the Labour Party finished?

**BRISTOL: NORTH**  
Thu 11 Jun, 7.30pm,  
5th Floor, The Canteen,  
Hamilton House,  
80 Stokes Croft,  
BS1 3QY

**MANCHESTER: CHORLTON**  
Wed 10 Jun, 7pm,  
Proof Bar,  
30 Manchester Rd,  
M21 0BQ

**MEDWAY**  
Thu 11 Jun, 7.30pm,  
Conference room,  
The Nucleus Arts Centre,  
272 High St, Chatham,  
ME4 4BP

**WIGAN**  
Wed 10 Jun, 7.30pm,  
Little Fifteen Pub,  
17-19 Wallgate,  
(opposite Wigan Post Office),  
WN1 1LD

### HUDDERSFIELD

#### France — the resistible rise of Marine le Pen and the Nazi Front National

Wed 10 Jun, 6.30pm,  
Brian Jackson House,  
2 New North Parade (near both train and bus stations),  
HD1 5JP

### IPSWICH

#### State and revolution

Tue 7 Jul, 7pm,  
Labour Club,  
33-35 Silent St,  
IP1 1TF

### KIRKCALDY

#### The new liberalism in Scotland

Mon 6 Jul, 7.30pm,  
Betty Nicol's Pub,  
297 High St,  
KY1 1JL

### LANCASTER

#### Is Britain moving to the right?

Thu 11 Jun, 7pm,  
Friends Meeting House,  
Meeting House Lane,  
LA1 1TX

### LEICESTER

#### Sexism and the system — how do we fight for women's liberation?

Wed 17 Jun, 7pm,  
Leicester Adult Education College,  
2 Wellington St (Belvoir St entrance),  
LE1 6HL

### LEEDS: CITY CENTRE

#### The housing crisis — where are we all going to live?

Thu 11 Jun, 7pm,  
The Swarthmore Education Centre,  
2-7 Woodhouse Square,  
LS3 1AD

### LIVERPOOL

#### Islamophobia today — racism and the politics of fear

Thu 11 Jun, 7pm,  
The Brink Cafe,  
21 Parr St (near Concert Square),  
Liverpool L1 4JN

### LONDON: BRENT & HARROW

#### Pride, politics and protest — a revolutionary guide to LGBT liberation

Thu 11 Jun, 7.30pm,  
The Pepperpot Centre,  
1a Thorpe Close,  
Ladbroke Grove (very close to the station),  
W10 5XL

### LONDON: Brixton

#### Isis, Syria, Palestine and Iraq — the crisis in the Middle East

Wed 10 Jun, 7pm,  
Vida Walsh Centre,  
2b Saltoun Rd (near Effra Rd, facing Windrush Square), SW2 1EP

### LONDON: CAMDEN

#### Immigration — the myths used to divide us

Thu 11 Jun, 7pm,  
Theatro Technis,  
26 Crowndale Rd, NW1 1TT

### LONDON: EALING

#### How do we fight for women's liberation today?

Wed 10 Jun, 7.30pm,  
W3 Gallery,  
185 High St,  
Acton W3 9DJ

### LONDON: HACKNEY

#### After the elections in Spain — is Podemos the future for the left?

Thu 11 Jun, 7.30pm,  
The Round Chapel,  
2 Powerscroft Rd (corner Lower Clapton Rd), E5 0PU

### LONDON: HORNSEY AND WOOD GREEN

#### Why do people believe right wing ideas?

Wed 10 Jun, 7.30pm,  
West Indian Cultural Centre,  
9 Clarendon Rd,  
Haringey,  
N8 0DD

### LONDON: ISLINGTON

#### Raunch culture — the new sexism

Thu 11 Jun, 7pm  
The Old Fire Station,  
84 Mayton St,  
N7 6QT

### LONDON: KINGSTON

#### What would a socialist society look like?

Wed 10 Jun, 7pm,  
Kingston Quaker Centre,  
Fairfield East,  
KT1 2PT

### LONDON: LEWISHAM

#### Water protests, gay marriage and crisis in the Church — why is Ireland changing?

Wed 10 Jun, 7.30pm,  
West Greenwich Community and Arts Centre,  
141 Greenwich High Rd (near Greenwich main line and DLR Station),  
SE10 8JA

### LONDON: NEWHAM

#### Race, class and police brutality in the US

Wed 10 Jun, 7pm,  
Stratford Advice Arcade,  
107-109 The Grove (next to Morrisons car park),  
E15 1HP

### LONDON: TOWER HAMLETS

#### What kind of left do we need?

Wed 17 Jun, 7pm,  
Oxford House,  
Derbyshire St (opp Bethnal Green Rd Tesco),  
E2 6HG

### LONDON: WALTHAM FOREST

#### An introduction to Marxist economics

Wed 10 Jun, 7.30pm,  
Quaker Meeting House,  
1a Jewel Rd (off Hoe St),  
E17 4QU

### MANCHESTER: CITY CENTRE

#### Human nature — are we too selfish for socialism?

Thu 11 Jun, 7pm,  
Friends Meeting House,  
6 Mount St, M2 5NS

### MANCHESTER: LONGSIGHT AND LEVENSHULME

#### Why are there so few strikes?

Wed 10 Jun, 7.30pm,  
Food Factory,  
884 Stockport Rd,  
M19 3BN

### NEWCASTLE

#### Why do the unions still follow the Labour Party?

Thu 11 Jun, 7pm,  
Heaton Community Centre,  
Trewitt Rd, NE6 5DY

### NORWICH

#### Migrant lives matter — stop the slaughter in the Mediterranean

Thu 11 Jun, 7.30pm,  
Vauxhall Centre,  
Johnson Place, NR2 2SA

### OXFORD

#### Socialism and science

Wed 10 Jun, 7.30pm,  
Restore, Manzil Way  
(off Cowley Rd), OX4 1YH

### PORTSMOUTH

#### Lenin — what he really stood for

Wed 10 Jun, 7.30pm,  
Somerstown Central,  
Rivers St, PO5 4EY

### ROTHERHAM

#### From coal mines to call centres — how has the working class changed?

Wed 24 Jun, 7pm,  
Bridge Inn, Greasbrough Rd (near the bus and train stations), S60 1RB

### SHEFFIELD: CITY CENTRE

#### The roots of terrorism

Thu 11 Jun, 7.30pm,  
Central United Reformed Church,  
60 Norfolk St (near the Crucible theatre), S1 2JB

### SOUTHAMPTON

#### Marxism and classical music

Wed 10 Jun, 7.30pm,  
High Street Cafe,  
153 High St, SO14 2BT

### WOLVERHAMPTON

### AND WALSALL

#### Why we hate Mondays — Marx's theory of alienation

Thu 11 Jun, 7.30pm,  
Grain Store,  
King St, WV1 1ST

### YORK

#### Why workers can change the world

Wed 10 Jun, 7.30pm,  
Sea Horse Hotel,  
4 Fawcett St,  
YO10 4AH

## { MOVEMENT EVENTS }

### DORCHESTER

#### How do we stop fracking?

Sat 6 Jun, 1.30pm,  
Colliton Club (opposite County Hall), Colliton Park, DT1 1XJ  
Organised by Dorset Socialists

### LANCASTER

#### Reflections on life in Palestine

Michael Lavalette speaks on his recent visit to the West Bank  
Wed 10 Jun, 7pm,  
Gregson Community and Arts Centre,  
33 Moorgate, LA1 3PY  
Organised by Lancaster Palestine Solidarity Campaign

### NATIONAL

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Central London. Book now on 020 7819 1190 or at [marxismfestival.org.uk](http://marxismfestival.org.uk)

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# The divide between rich and poor explored on the screen

**Tomáš Tengely-Evans** looks at *The Divide*, a new documentary that looks at the disfiguring effects of class division without ever slipping into voyeurism

**DIRECTOR KATHARINE Round's film *The Divide* is an innovative look at how growing inequality is disfiguring society and disempowers people.**

But it's not some voyeuristic documentary on poverty. It also shows instances of people fighting back and trying to take control of their lives.

The film is based around seven "windows" into different individuals' lives.

The opening shots are particularly powerful, as we're introduced to each of the protagonists standing in front of their bathroom mirrors.

They're all given a voice. But it's also as if they were addressing you directly.

In the first window, we're introduced to Alden, a top psychologist whose office is opposite the big Wall Street banks.

## Problems

He specialises in treating the ailments of his super rich banker clients—and perhaps wishes to emulate their "success" but also suffers from similar problems.

In stark contrast is Leah, a fast food worker in Richmond, Virginia. "My week starts on Sunday evening and goes right through until Friday," she explains.

Round's inspiration for the film came from Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett's influential book *The Spirit Level*.

They argued that the more unequal a society, the more social problems there are from poor diets to mental health.

In Glasgow's Pollock housing estate Darren tells us about how poverty and substance problems



**FAST FOOD** worker Leah looks into a mirror at the start of the film

PICTURE: OPEN CITY DOCUMENTARY FILMS

mean that he'll most likely follow his mum—and be dead by 36.

Meanwhile, in a gated community playground one child is shunned because he's from the "poorer" part of the gated community.

Inequality does disfigure society—but it affects poor people much more profoundly than the rich.

So when the subjects are asked if they have control over their lives, Alden replies "absolutely", while

Leah and other working class people say they don't.

The film shows the grinding effects of poverty—without being seeped in moralism or becoming a liberal spectator sport.

It also places it in a wider political context of former US president Ronald Reagan and British prime minister Margaret Thatcher letting the market rip.

If it ended there, then it would

have been a perfectly decent documentary. But it goes even further, to show people fighting back and the possibility of change.

Leah is worn down by her job. But just before the credits begin to roll we see her on a picket line fighting for a \$15 an hour minimum wage.

*The Divide*. Directed by Katharine Round. [thedividedocumentary.com](http://thedividedocumentary.com)  
The film will premiere at the Sheffield Doc Fest on 10 June

## Barnsley punks bring politics back to centre stage

### MUSIC

#### FROM ACORNS MIGHTY OAKS

The Hurriers  
Out now  
[thehurriers.co.uk](http://thehurriers.co.uk)

**FORMED TWO** years ago in Barnsley, South Yorkshire, The Hurriers call themselves "A proper socialist punk band".

They have gained a reputation by gigging and appearing at festivals across Britain.

Their debut album, *From Acorns Mighty Oaks* is produced by Alan Smyth

who worked on the Arctic Monkeys' first album *Whatever People Say I Am, That's What I'm Not*.

But it is the Clash who first spring to mind when you hear the band. Their sound is accessible and appealing.

The first two tracks *Spectemur Agendo* and *Enjoy the Storm* are clear rock territory.

But The Hurriers' influences outside punk come through in other songs with their Rocksteady beats.

Fourth track *Faith to Fight* has an upbeat guitar

riff and melodic vocals.

Here you can clearly hear the new wave sound of bands such as The Jam.

Politics run through the whole album.

Tracks such as *Britain Last and Truth and Justice* take up fighting the fascists and police brutality during the 1984-85 Miners' Strike.

The origins of the punk rebellion lay in many different places. But its discord captured the mood—and there's plenty of space for The Hurriers' angry political music today.

The Hurriers

### THEATRE

#### THE SIEGE

The Freedom Theatre of Jenin  
10 and 11 June  
Nottingham Playhouse,  
Nottingham NG1 5AF  
[nottinghamplayhouse.co.uk](http://nottinghamplayhouse.co.uk)  
Tickets £14, £12 concessions

THIS PLAY is inspired by a true story from the second Palestinian Intifada in 2002.

It tells how a group of Palestinian fighters were besieged by the Israeli army in the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem for 39 days.

These performances are part of the first tour of Britain by the Freedom Theatre of Jenin refugee camp, Palestine.

### TELEVISION

#### 1864

BBC4  
9pm Sundays

THIS DANISH drama tells the story of the 1864 War between Denmark and Prussia through the diary of Inge, the daughter of a Danish baron.

It focuses on brothers Peter and Laust Jensen who are both in love with Inge. They enthusiastically enlist in the army during a ferment of nationalism.

The series skips between the 1860s and the present day.

It is narrated by Claudia, a despairing young woman in present day Denmark who feels she has no future. She gets a job looking after an old baron, who's related to Inge.

Claudia finds Inge's journal and begins reading it

Inge's journal links past and present

together with the baron.

Through Inge's writing we get a sense of the horror of war, which is portrayed with powerful symbolism.

It affects Claudia, who lost her brother in a more recent war—in Afghanistan.

The series also ranges through 19th century politics. Both the Danish and Prussian ruling classes try and build up a sense of "national identity" after the 1848 revolutions.

It is a brilliant abridged history of middle class nationalist movements, told through the eyes of different classes facing war.

**Richard Stephens**



**WHAT IS the situation in Syria after more than four years of conflict?**

It is a state of catastrophe. Whole cities have been destroyed. More than 80 percent of the population live on the poverty line. Inflation is rising and unemployment runs at 60 percent.

The regime has been unable to pay public sector workers' wages for the last four months.

At least half the population is internally displaced, others have fled the country. Small numbers reach Europe, most refugees travel through to Turkey, Egypt and Libya.

But only really the better off and middle class are able to travel. It can cost as much as £4,500.

The reasons people protested and started the revolutionary process have not gone away, they have only deepened.

**The struggle started as a popular revolt against president Bashar al-Assad's regime. How has the dominance of the military conflict led to different Islamist groups gaining more control of the opposition?**

The structure of the state in Syria has more in common with what happened in Libya, where it was impossible to separate the military from the head of the regime.

Assad's security services imposed repression for four decades prior to the uprising.

So the biggest problem is the lack of a large democratic and progressive left organisation of the masses. You cannot reduce it to that but it would have made a difference.

During the start of the popular uprising we had coordination committees and youth organisations, but the trade unions were completely co-opted by the regime.

The activists who started the uprising suffered first from the regime's repression and then from the Islamic fundamentalist forces who were absent at the beginning.

The shift to a military dynamic over the past two years has benefitted the fundamentalist forces most.

Until 2013 you had military clashes but the popular movement was very much present. Today it's very minor.

You have popular protests in some areas, but not on the same scale of even two years ago. This is a big problem.

**Isis is making new gains across the region. How is this affecting Assad's power base?**

The regime only controls around 22 percent of the country, but this is where 50 to 60 percent of the population lives.

The regime's military

defeats have pushed it to concentrate its forces in the regions already under its control. Such as the coast with the cities of Lattakiya and Tartous, the two cities in central Syria, Hama and Homs, and the capital Damascus.

Much of the rest of the country is in the hands of mainly Islamic fundamentalist forces, except for the Kurdish regions and some of the Damascus countryside.

Since the failure of the

“

**Bashar al-Assad's regime is not popular but people are tired**

regime's offensive in February to cut supplies to Aleppo's opposition forces, the army is on the defensive almost everywhere.

**What does the recent resistance to army conscription reflect?**

This resistance has been growing and shows the unpopularity of the regime, even in the areas it controls.

More people are refusing to send their sons into the Syrian

army to be killed. There have been popular protests, mostly in the Alawite populated areas. Young people pay bribes to get out of the army, some escape the country.

As the regime's structural problems deepen, it is even more dependent on foreign allies, especially Iran and Hizbollah, but also Russia.

**What is the situation for Palestinians within Syria?**

The Yarmouk refugee camp was once home to 200,000 Palestinians and Syrians before the revolution. They have been under siege for nearly two years. Now only 15,000 are left.

Assad has bombed numerous Palestinian camps throughout Syria.

Recently the regime started talking about supporting the Yarmouk Palestinians. Suddenly they want to present themselves as the Palestinians' protectors because Isis has invaded the camp.

**HAS religious sectarianism played a role in the struggle?**

The regime uses sectarian propaganda to scare religious minorities and secular people saying the only alternative to Assad is the fundamentalists.

But unfortunately some of the opposition also use sectarianism arguing that they are part of a “Sunni” uprising against an “Alawite” regime.

They believe this can win them 80 percent of the population. But this is a miscalculation.

**What about the role of Western imperialism?**

The West wants to end the revolutionary process.

The US supports the latest Saudi Arabian military intervention in Yemen, which has killed more than 2,000. The Saudis are important allies but there are also tensions.

Saudi Arabia planned the Yemen intervention independently to show it would not allow Iran to wield too much power in the region.

The US is also giving money to Egypt's regime. This is no longer conditional on “democratic advances”.

In Syria the US wanted a “Yemeni” solution, keeping the regime, but without Assad. Now Assad is seen as a way to stabilise things, while using Iran to help break Isis in Syria and in Iraq.

Within Syria the regime is not popular but people are tired. Their children cannot go to school and they struggle for the basics of life.

The continuation of the military conflict is no way forward. It does not work in the favour of the masses.

Joseph Daher will be speaking on **Syria Today and Sectarianism in the Middle East** at the Marxism 2015 festival in London, 9-13 July. marxismfestival.org.uk

LIFE UNDER constant assault in the city of Aleppo

# CONFLICT AND WAR IN SYRIA

Judith Orr spoke to Syrian socialist Joseph Daher about the resistance, the regime, the West and rise of Isis after more than four years of conflict in the country

The war has produced thousands of refugees

**FOCUS ON SPAIN**

## New parties break through in regional elections

Election results in the Spanish state reflect a mood for change. But there needs to be a clear left alternative, argues Dave Sewell

ELECTIONS IN the Spanish state last month shattered the party system that's dominated for four decades.

The ruling Tory PP lost majorities and the Labour-type PSOE failed to gain them. New parties flourished. And there were welcome and exciting gains for the radical left.

It was far from the result the establishment wanted. The end of Spain's recession was meant to restore normality.

It turned out mass evictions, unemployment weren't that easy to forgive.

And millions-strong protest movements had fed a sense that change was possible.

But nor was it quite the result the left hoped for.

Last year new party Podemos surged to the top of the polls from nowhere.

### Radical

It spoke the language of social movements and borrowed their method of mass local assemblies. Its leaders associated themselves with Greek radical left party Syriza.

It has certainly broken through into the mainstream. But it is one of several new parties in an increasingly fractured landscape.

In many regional elections Podemos ended up vying for third place, closely followed by right wing liberal party Ciudadanos.

Both tapped into anger at corrupt politicians. But the anti Catalan independence Ciudadanos represents a bid to save the status quo by giving it a new face.

In Barcelona Podemos was part of Barcelona in Common. Its leader Ada Colau—better known for direct actions to stop housing evictions—could soon be mayor.

Anti-capitalist party CUP also made gains.

In Madrid the coalition

THE LEFT mayoral candidate in Barcelona on a protest

### BACK STORY

**Simultaneous elections took place across the Spanish state on 24 May**

● Many different parties and alliances ran in various local and regional elections

● But generally new parties did well at the expense of the established parties

● Elections in 13 of the 17 devolved parliaments produced no overall winner. After a similar result in Andalucia over two months ago, there's still no coalition

debates have been surreal.

The Countess and “the Communist”—outgoing Tory mayor Esperanza Aguirre and retired judge Manuela Carmena of Podemos-backed platform Madrid Now—finished almost neck and neck.

Aguirre first called for a grand coalition to stop Carmena “breaking the democratic and Western system”. Then she offered to work with Carmena herself—if she dropped her supposed

“

**Podemos did break into the mainstream—but as one of several parties**

plan to “constitute soviets in the neighbourhoods”.

The left including Podemos made a big step forward, which can help shape the struggles ahead.

But the strategy that Podemos' leadership fought to impose on the party ended up holding it back.

They recognised that many voters with right wing ideas were also furious with the existing parties.

They strenuously avoided alienating them—insisting Podemos was “neither left nor right” but of the “people”.

They called for clearing out the ruling “caste”. But they moderated their policies to those once pursued by social democrats.

### Strategy

There were big debates, and a clampdown on the revolutionary left inside Podemos. But the strategy of looking to the “centre” has come unstuck at both sides.

Around half the people who voted for the radical Madrid Now didn't vote for Podemos in the regional election.

And Podemos' embarrassment at its association with the left has been a gift to Ciudadanos, which can honestly say it has none.

With continuing debates inside and outside Podemos, hopefully one thing is becoming clear.

Being against the status quo is a good start. But in a society divided into classes with opposing interests, putting forward an alternative means choosing a side.

A coordination committee protest in a liberated area of the city of Deir Ezzor in 2012

## The Syrian popular uprising is caught between Assad and Isis

by JUDITH ORR

**THE REVOLUTION in Syria broke out in 2011 as part of the wave of revolts against dictatorships in the region.**

Mass popular demonstrations began by asking for reforms.

Thousands of local coordination committees sprung up to organise the opposition movement and provide an alternative to the regime.

But dictator Bashar al-Assad responded with violent repression and the revolt turned into a life and death struggle to bring down the whole regime.

Assad has hung on to power partly because of his hold on the military. However he has increasingly had to rely on regional allies and the mainly Shia Lebanese Hizbollah forces.

Assad is from the Alawite sect, an offshoot of Shia Islam, while the majority of the population are Sunni Muslims.

### Rooted

The regime has tried to portray the uprising as a sectarian movement. But it was rooted in resistance to Assad's dictatorship.

Assad went all out to crush the uprising with airstrikes and ground troops. Millions have been forced to flee.

Defecting soldiers and opposition fighters created a Free Syrian Army to defend opposition areas. But as the conflict

descended into a military battle, various Islamist forces came to dominate the struggle.

The West has played a hypocritical role. At first it was keen to use the revolt as an excuse for regime change—to get rid of Assad, one local dictator it did not support.

For the governments of the US and Britain this was not about supporting an uprising they didn't like, but reasserting imperial control. It was only international campaigning that stopped direct military involvement.

More recently the imperial powers have switched to viewing Assad more positively as a bulwark against the growth of Isis.

Assad had concentrated on crushing the popular revolt. Meanwhile Islamist groups grew in strength.

They too saw the popular movements and local committees as a block to their aims.

The mass of ordinary people became caught between two militarised forces—neither of which represented their interests.

Today Isis is the most powerful group fighting Assad. It is also fighting the US-backed regime in Iraq.

Western and Gulf forces are allied in a bombing campaign against Isis.

This imperialist intervention has only brought greater suffering to the remaining populations.

### READ MORE

● **Isis and counter-revolution: towards a Marxist analysis** by Anne Alexander, International Socialism journal 145 bit.ly/1ArWkJ9

● **Syria Freedom Forever** by Statement from the Syrian Left Current in 2013 bit.ly/1PSB8Xs

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# Marxism 2015 PALESTINE, THE MIDDLE EAST AND IMPERIALISM

9-13 July, London • A 5 day political festival hosted by the SWP

In 2011 revolutions and mass movements across the Middle East inspired the world. Yet four years on, the region is in turmoil. Dictators have been replaced by brutal regimes carrying out vicious counter revolution and encouraging sectarian division.

## Speakers include:

Joseph Daher, Sami Ramadani, Gilbert Achcar, Ala'a Shehabi, Waleed Daou, Anne Alexander, Simon Assaf, Phil Marfleet, Ron Margulies, John Newsinger, Alex Callinicos, Peyman Jafari, Volodymyr Ishchenko, Tomas Tengely-Evans and Lucia Pradella

## Meetings

Meetings at Marxism 2015 will look at the issues facing the region and offer analysis of the current situation. They include: Imperialism today • Revolution and counter revolution in Egypt • The Arab uprising: results and prospects • Sectarianism in the Middle East • Syria today • Who are Isis? • Gulf capital and the political economy of the counter revolution • Turkey and the Kurds • Islamism: from resistance to repression • Iraq, Afghanistan and the global military empire • After the nuclear deal: where is Iran going? • Russia and the Ukraine

## The full timetable is out now



The timetable for Marxism 2015 is now online. Hard copies are also available.

To order timetables call 020 7819 1190 or email [info@marxismfestival.org.uk](mailto:info@marxismfestival.org.uk)

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# New right to buy scheme will worsen homes crisis

The housing crisis in Britain is causing misery for millions—and it is about to get even worse as the Tories plan more selloffs, writes Annette Mackin

**THE Tories launched their new right to buy scheme for housing association tenants last week.**

Under Margaret Thatcher's previous scheme only council tenants could buy their homes at a large discount.

It was a disaster that saw the loss of 1.88 million council homes while just 345,000 were built to replace them.

Now it is to be extended to 1.3 million more homes.

Defend Council Housing chair Eileen Short told Socialist Worker, "This is the exact opposite of what needs to happen. We will end up with less homes."

"If you look at figures for London alone, 88 percent of the housing need backlog is for affordable homes."

"It's not the only problem—11,000 families were evicted in England and Wales in the first three months of this year."

Eileen added, "The extension of right to buy is the extension of the Tory onslaught against council housing."

The new right to buy plans might look enticing. In London it is estimated some could save around £100,000 when buying their home. But it is a swindle.

It's true that many will get a lump sum of money to help them buy their home. But much of the housing will be then sold on to private landlords—stripping social housing from the children of the people who first benefitted from right to buy.

And the government will pay for the discounted selloffs by making councils flog their most valuable properties.

Across Britain there are 11 million private renters. Some 3.3 million 20-34 year olds live with their parents due to exorbitant private rents. And there are around 1.3 million households in England on local authorities' housing waiting lists.

## Replace

Right to buy will make this situation worse. The Tories claim every house purchased will be replaced "on a one-for-one basis" with affordable homes.

But since 2012 only 46 percent of properties sold under recent right to buy legislation have been replaced.

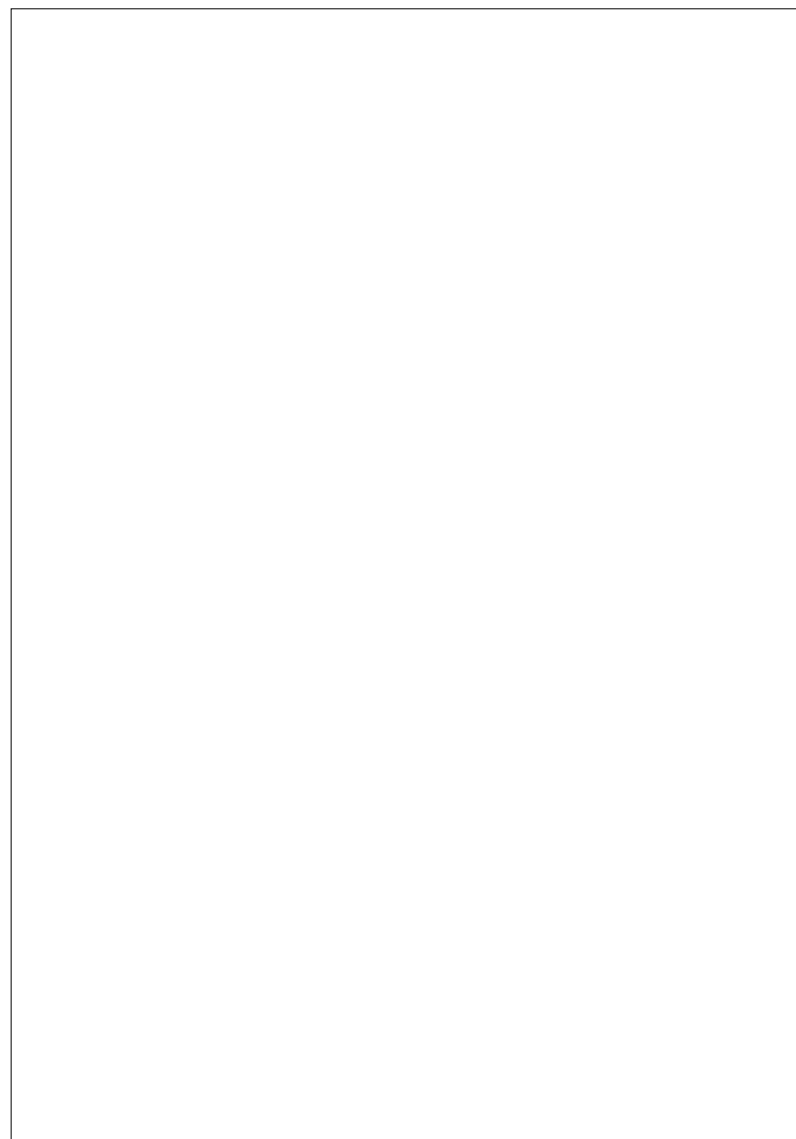
There is resistance to this crisis. Defend Council Housing along with others, including the Radical Housing Network, the Unite union and Disabled People Against the Cuts, have organised a housing summit.

This will be for tenants and activists to build the fightback for rent controls and new council housing.

Eileen said, "This has to be a real fight. Councils, who will be at the frontline of the coming attacks, and trade unions have to get involved and resist. This is not a time for handwringing."

"It will be a place for anyone who wants to fight for housing."

Tenants and housing summit 13 June, 11am-4.30pm, central London. [defendcouncilhousing.org.uk](http://defendcouncilhousing.org.uk)



TENANTS SAY no to council house selloffs

## 'Let's step up the fight'

**LIZ KITCHING** is an activist with Hands Off Our Homes in Leeds, West Yorkshire. She is also a tenant who has been hit by the hated bedroom tax.

Liz told Socialist Worker, "The extension of right to buy is an assault on us all."

"It's an attack on the idea of publicly owned and democratically controlled housing."

"It is an appalling idea—especially as the bedroom tax looks like it will be extended. There aren't any suitable homes for people to be rehoused in as it is."

The Tories also used the queen's speech to signal a further assault on benefits.

Liz said this will also

make the housing crisis sharper for poor people.

"The Tories want to make housing benefit even more stringent."

"They are planning to attack discretionary housing payments. This can help cover the cost of the bedroom tax."

"We know it is going to be reduced, and we know this will hit poor people hard."

Liz urged activists to attend the housing summit.

She said, "We will be coming down from Leeds, where we've been having monthly meetings."

"We have to step up the fight. We have to organise to take on the Tories and make this parliament extremely difficult for them."

## Homelessness crisis deepens

**OFFICIAL** homeless figures in London have risen by 79 percent under the Tories—outside London the increase was 14 percent.

Homelessness charity Crisis says, "Welfare reform, benefit cuts and a chronic shortage of affordable homes mean more and more people are coming to their council as homeless."

## Refusing to assist evictions

**Firefighters** in the FBU union unanimously voted to refuse to assist in evictions at their conference last month.

A motion was put by Merseyside FBU which condemned police and non-union firefighters' storming and clearing an occupied former bank.

It said firefighters should "collectively resist by all means any instruction to participate in similar evictions".

## Rough sleepers using caves

**A homeless woman** fell 30 feet down an embankment in Merseyside and broke her spine after seeking shelter in caves.

The caves are being used by homeless people regularly, despite the danger of gaining access to them.

**Only 46 percent of homes sold under recent right to buy legislation have been replaced**

## Rich gain from selloffs

**THE TORIES** are keen to paint the latest right to buy scheme as a boost for poor people to own their own home.

But this is a lie. Look at who has benefitted from the first scheme set up by Thatcher.

A third of ex-council homes sold in the 1980s are now owned by private landlords.

In Wandsworth, south London, of 15,874 homes acquired under right to buy some 6,180 are owned by private landlords—nearly 40 percent of dwellings.

The scheme has worked out well for tycoon Charles Gow and his wife Karin.

In Putney, south west

London, they own 40 ex-council flats on one estate.

Charles' father Ian Gow was Tory housing minister at the peak of Thatcher's right to buy scheme.

It is estimated the Gows' properties could be worth up to £10 million.

Some 30 years after right to buy was introduced, it is clear that one group has benefitted—and it's not poor families stuck on an ever growing waiting list.



## IN BRIEF

**Luxury hotel faces industrial action**

WORKERS AT a luxury hotel opposite parliament could launch the London hotel sector's first strike for 15 years.

Migrant women room attendants employed by cleaning subcontractor WGC at the Park Plaza County Hall hotel are being made to clean 16 rooms a day instead of 13.

They say the pressure to work faster is backed up by bullying and harassment.

●See **Hotel Workers Branch** on Facebook

**Protesters say 'lock out' privatisation**

AROUND 150 people joined a protest outside Manchester Royal Infirmary last Saturday.

It was organised by nursing students. Speakers included a Unison union activist from Stockport Mental Health branch who spoke about a recent successful consultative strike ballot for action over cuts.

**Activists' day to Reclaim the Power**

CLIMATE ACTIVISTS from Reclaim the Power held a day of direct action against the energy bosses across Britain on Monday of this week.

They blocked the front and back entrances of the World Coal Association conference on carbon capture and storage at the Institute of Directors in London.

Protesters also blockaded the steps to the department of energy and climate change with signs saying Wind not Gas in a challenge to the government's energy policy.

Others occupied the offices of Media Zoo, the PR agents for fracking firm Ineos.

**Odeon workers fight for jobs and pay**

THE BECTU union has launched a petition to stop bosses at Odeon cinemas sacking 100 workers.

Private Equity firm Terra Firma want to sack the workers as part of an attempt to sell the cinema chain.

The petition demands no compulsory redundancies and no reduction in pay and hours.

●Sign the petition [chn.ge/1FqPjt](http://chn.ge/1FqPjt)

**Discussing the roots of racism**

MORE THAN 60 people attended the Racism, Resistance and Revolution day school organised by the Socialist Workers Party in central London last Saturday.

Different sessions looked at the roots of racism, privilege theory, Islamophobia and black nationalism, before people gathered for a final session on fighting racism today. Maz Saleem, who attended, said, "There was so much to discuss, we should have had a weekend."

## FIGHTING THE CUTS



A UK Uncut day of action in Nottingham last Saturday

PICTURE: RICHARD BUCKWELL

## SCHOOLS

# Victory in Lewisham over academy plans

by SADIE ROBINSON

TEACHERS IN Lewisham, south east London, were celebrating a victory this week after threats to convert schools to academies were withdrawn.

NUT and NASUWT union members at three schools—Prendergast Vale, Prendergast and Prendergast Ladywell—had planned to strike against the plans on Wednesday and

Thursday of this week.

They called off the action after the Leathersellers firm, which runs the schools, backed off from the academy plan.

The campaign against academies involved strikes, protests and a legal challenge to government regulations.

Previous walkouts won overwhelming support from parents and saw students refuse to cross picket lines.

Workers stressed that the

dispute remains live as the Department for Education will rewrite regulations so that schools could attempt academy conversion in the future.

But this week's victory shows that determined action can get results.

●Go to the Stop Academies in Lewisham Facebook page for updates. Send messages of support to [nut@lewisham.gov.uk](mailto:nut@lewisham.gov.uk) and [kathy.duggan@exec.nasuwt.org.uk](mailto:kathy.duggan@exec.nasuwt.org.uk)

## SWANSEA

TEACHERS OF pupils who are not in mainstream school are set to strike in Swansea for three days from the 15 June.

The NASUWT and NUT union members struck two days last month in their campaign to protect the Education Other Than At School (EOTAS) service.

The pupils they teach include those with social,

emotional and behavioural difficulties, physical or mental health issues.

Teachers in the EOTAS service are fighting to protect vulnerable children from cuts to education.

**Matthew Shephard**

●Messages of support should be sent to Helen John at [hmjohns64@hotmail.com](mailto:hmjohns64@hotmail.com) See on [fb.me/1HDRcm6](https://www.facebook.com/1HDRcm6)

## EAST LONDON

TEACHERS AT Rokeby School in Newham, east London, struck on Tuesday of this week against plans to turn the school into an academy.

The NUT union members plan six more days of strikes this month and hope other schools will join them.

●Send messages of support to [georgefuller@rokeby.newham.sch.uk](mailto:georgefuller@rokeby.newham.sch.uk)

## UNIVERSITY AND COLLEGE ROUND-UP

Workers in the UCU and Unison unions were set to strike together at London Metropolitan University on Thursday of this week.

The workers are fighting plans to slash 165 jobs at the university. The action follows a 24-hour strike by UCU members last month.

Strikers plan to picket from 8.30-11am on the day.

●Strike rally, 12-2pm, The Women's Library, 25 Old Castle Street, London E1 7NT. Send messages of support to [unison@londonmet.ac.uk](mailto:unison@londonmet.ac.uk) and [ucuinconfidence@gmail.com](mailto:ucuinconfidence@gmail.com)

●UCU UNION members at Lewisham and Southwark College were set to walkout against cuts and redundancies on Thursday of this week.

Cuts put 312 jobs at risk and will close an entire site of the college.

●Send messages of support to [savelscollege@gmail.com](mailto:savelscollege@gmail.com)

■WARWICK UCU has called a protest against casualisation for Friday 19 June. Warwick University has one of the highest rates of casualisation in higher education.

Workers are fighting TeachHigher, a recruitment service in Warwick that treats workers as temporary and gives them fewer employment rights.

●Protest from 12 noon, Library Rd, University of Warwick no2casualisationwarwick@gmail.com for more info

■UCU UNION members at the University of South Wales have backed strikes to stop course closures and redundancies. Workers were meeting to decide their next steps as Socialist Worker went to press.

■MID CHESHIRE College UCU is balloting for strikes over compulsory redundancies. It ends on 17 June.

## DEATH IN CUSTODY

## Funeral for Sheku Bayoh

by ANNETTE MACKIN

THE FUNERAL of a man who died following contact with police in Fife, Scotland, is set to take place this Sunday.

Sheku Bayoh died on 3 May after he lost consciousness after being restrained by police.

His funeral is set to take place in Kirkcaldy, Fife, and a protest march is being organised in the town at noon by his family and supporters to demand justice.

Pathologists have been unable to establish the cause of Sheku's death. Nine police officers involved in



Sheku Bayoh

the incident which led to his death have refused to speak to independent investigators.

●See **Justice For Sheku Ahmed Tejan Bayoh** on Facebook for more details about the march when they are announced

## HEALTH WORKERS

## Porters go to parliament

STRIKING HOSPITAL porters from Dundee took their battle to be regraded to the Scottish parliament last week. They're demanding action to end their nine-week all-out strike.

The workers want to be paid the same as the vast majority of NHS hospital porters in Scotland.

Two coaches of strikers were joined by a delegation of homelessness caseworkers from Glasgow who are also on indefinite strike.

Jenny Marra, a Labour Party MSP for the North East, had tabled a question for Scottish National Party (SNP) leader Nicola

Sturgeon about the dispute.

The SNP controls the NHS in Scotland and could resolve the dispute, but it has done nothing.

Yet Marra simply noted the porters' claim and invited Sturgeon to comment.

Predictably Sturgeon praised the porters for the job they do and said she was "hopeful" their dispute would be resolved.

Marra made no reply. The strikers might have expected more from Labour's health spokesperson.

●Find more details of the strike at **Support Ninewells Porters** on Facebook

## SOLIDARITY

## Support Robert O'Donnell

UNISON UNION rep Robert O'Donnell has been sacked by the Scottish Exhibition and Conference Centre (SECC).

Unison believes that Robert, a gardener, was unfairly sacked by the SECC management following an alleged unwitnessed incident with his supervisor.

Unison branch officer Scott Donohoe said, "Unison is totally convinced that this was a trumped up charge and that the dismissal relates to Robert's role as a trade union activist."

"Over recent years the SECC, which is 91 percent owned by Glasgow City Council, has refused to recognise trade unions for

collective bargaining purposes and has been hostile to trade union recruitment activities."

Robert has 12 years' service with the SECC during which time he has never been the subject of a complaint, investigation or disciplinary action.

●Send emails of protest to SECC chief executive [peter.duthie@secc.co.uk](mailto:peter.duthie@secc.co.uk) Glasgow City Council leader [gordon.matheson@councillors.glasgow.gov.uk](mailto:gordon.matheson@councillors.glasgow.gov.uk) Glasgow City Council chief executive [Annemarie.O'Donnell@glasgow.gov.uk](mailto:Annemarie.O'Donnell@glasgow.gov.uk) SECC board member [graeme.hendry@councillors.glasgow.gov.uk](mailto:graeme.hendry@councillors.glasgow.gov.uk)

## HUMAN RIGHTS

## Lib Dems are hypocrites

AROUND 250 people protested outside Downing Street against the Tories' threats to human rights last Saturday.

There was a heavy Lib Dem presence. Lib Dem MP and leadership hopeful Tim Farron appealed to "British values" telling the crowd, "Human

rights aren't 'irritating'—they're what makes us British."

Protester Oisín told Socialist Worker the Tories' plan to repeal the Human Rights Act is "one of their most callous attacks". He thought the Lib Dems were "hypocritical" and were "hijacking" the protest.



## DETENTION

# Solidarity demo for Dungavel detainees

by MARGARET WOODS

UP TO 400 people joined a demonstration outside Dungavel detention centre in Scotland last Saturday. The protest was called by the Scottish TUC (STUC).

Refugees in the centre have recently been on hunger strike.

Protesters were angry that despite this the STUC, religious and other groups were denied access to visit the detainees to assess the situation.

The centre has faced strong opposition and demands that it be shut down ever since it opened.

Controversy over the centre forced the Home Office to abandon the detention of children there.

The Scottish National Party government has now joined the demands to close the centre—and we should pressure SNP MPs to demand this in parliament.

Britain is the only country in Europe that detains people indefinitely.

A recent report showed that detaining people for more than a month causes serious trauma.

Over 3,000 people are currently in detention—some for as long as five years.



PROTESTERS DEMAND an end to detention

PICTURE: STEPHEN MCBROOM

A dawn raid on a family in Glasgow last week caused further anger. It took place while the father was out, and the mother and children were put on a flight to Africa within 12 hours.

Sustained campaigning in Glasgow had ended such raids and people are

in no mind to allow them to resume.

STUC leaders and religious groups addressed Saturday's protest along with Glasgow Campaign to Welcome Refugees.

Amal Azzudin from the Glasgow Girls, former detainee Pinar Aksu and

human rights lawyer Aamer Anwar also spoke.

The crowd was angry at being kept out of the car park, where protests are usually held.

It swept past police to bang on the fence and chant in solidarity so that detainees could hear the protest.

## TRANSPORT

### Reject deal at Network Rail

by RAYMIE KIERNAN

THE RMT union suspended a planned strike at Network Rail after bosses made a new offer.

The strike, over pay and job security, was set for Thursday of this week.

The union had put the action back on after a national RMT reps' meeting told union leaders that the bosses' previous deal wasn't good enough.

Yet it was good enough for union leaders in the RMT, TSSA and Unite unions to suspend strikes planned last month.

The new deal is not much better than the last. Bosses had offered a 1 percent pay rise for this year and 1.4 percent for 2016.

Now they have offered 2 percent this year and a rise equal to the RPI rate of inflation in November 2015 for next year.

RPI is currently less than 1 percent.

Bosses have made clear that the new offer "must be offset through agreed efficiencies"—meaning cuts.

And it gives no guarantees on protecting jobs beyond the end of next year.

Network Rail worker Tim told Socialist Worker, "We should settle for nothing less than RPI plus 0.5 percent with no strings."

"There are no below-inflation cuts being applied to Network Rail's suppliers or agency staff so why should we accept these cuts?"

Network Rail executives enjoy six-figure salaries.

Its staff work long, unsociable hours to keep the network going—and they deserve better.

Workers have the power to force more from the bosses. They should reject the deal.

Tim's name has been changed

## LONDON UNDERGROUND

### Tube workers fight rosters

TUBE WORKERS' unions are balloting for strikes against London Underground (LU) bosses' pay offer and the implementation of new conditions for the Night Tube.

The Aslef, RMT and TSSA unions are balloting. Results are due by the end of June.

Tory London mayor Boris Johnson wants roster changes that will mean anti-social hours and worse conditions.

LU bosses have also linked negotiations over plans to keep five Tube lines open at night to the current pay deal.

Unions have described it as "derisory". It is a two-year

offer with a "no strike" deal attached.

The best response would be sustained strikes. A strike on 8 July, the day of the Tory budget, would show how workers can resist austerity.

**RMT UNION members at TransPennine Express were set to strike this Sunday to demand the reinstatement of a colleague.**

Conductors in Cleethorpes and Sheffield, South Yorkshire, were set to take part in the action.

The union plans to strike every Sunday this month.

## MAINTENANCE WORKERS

### Escalating walkouts gets more out of Kone bosses

Engineering maintenance workers at door and lift firm Kone ended a strike on Monday of this week with a new agreement with management.

The Unite union members had walked out last week on what was to have been a two-week strike.

Kone worker Mick Joyce told Socialist Worker, "The deal is a big shift from the company. I can't quite call it a victory, but it's a good outcome."

The dispute centred on a system for monitoring workers' activity.

Unite had wanted to limit its use to monitoring health and safety, rather than timesheet checking

and monitoring workers' performance.

Mick said, "The way it was first produced to us was totally unacceptable, and workers rejected it by 97 percent in a consultative ballot."

"We now have a framework that protects our members against potential abuse of the system by managers and possible victimisation."

Mick said, "We hadn't had a dispute in 20 years, and we started with a succession of one and two day strikes."

"But we didn't feel that was enough so we escalated to two weeks—and sure enough that was a catalyst for resolving the dispute."

## STEEL WORKERS

### Tata Steel workers deliver resounding vote for action

by DAVE SEWELL

WORKERS IN the Community union at Tata Steel plants across Britain have voted by almost 90 percent to strike in defence of their pensions.

The result follows yes votes from members of the GMB and Ucat unions.

Unite—the second largest union at Tata after Community—was set to announce its result on Friday of this week. Between them the four unions represent 17,000 steel workers.

Tata wants to attack the British Steel Pension Scheme. This would force workers to retire at 65 instead of 60 to receive their full pension.

Community general secretary Roy Rickhuss said, "We stand on the brink of

the first national strike in the steel industry for over 30 years.

"Tata now has an opportunity to end this dispute by removing the threat of scheme closure and discussing alternative measures."

"Community's members at Tata Steel have now spoken loud and clear."

"Steelworkers are determined to stand up to Tata."

Tata has sites in Port Talbot, Llanwern in Newport, Shotton in Flintshire and Trostre in Carmarthenshire in Wales.

Other sites are in Motherwell in Scotland and Corby, Scunthorpe, Redcar, Rotherham, Hartlepool, Walsall and Wednesbury in England.

## DOCKLANDS LIGHT RAILWAY



Cleaners picket in London last week

PICTURE: ALAN KENNY

### Strikers out for better pay

CLEANERS WORKING for facilities firm Interserve on Docklands Light Railway (DLR) began a 48-hour strike on Wednesday of last week over pay and working conditions.

It followed an 80 percent vote for action by the RMT union members.

The union has said that bosses have refused to enter into meaningful negotiations

on a series of issues.

One longstanding claim is that workers haven't received pay rises that maintain the differences between grades.

This is central to the dispute and dates back to the previous firm that ran the contract before Interserve.

The union said the dispute has "ramifications for the entire outsourcing industry".



## 'WE WON'T LET THEM BULLY US'

by ANNETTE MACKIN

**NATIONAL GALLERY strikers and 2,000 of their supporters delivered a message to bosses last Saturday — "We are not going away."**

People from around Britain joined the rally on the gallery's doorstep in Trafalgar Square, central London.

It was organised by the PCS union against privatisation and the sacking of leading union rep Candy Udwin.

One striker told Socialist Worker, "It is really fantastic. The dispute has been a hard struggle but to see so many people come out has given me hope that we can win."

It was the workers' 29th strike day this year against plans to privatise 400 out of 600 jobs.

Bosses sacked Candy days after the general election, hoping workers would be cowed.

### Vowed

But workers called a ten-day strike and have vowed to do whatever it takes to beat privatisation and get Candy reinstated.

Graham, PCS branch secretary at the National Gallery,



**STRIKERS AND supporters rally in Trafalgar Square, central London**

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

told the crowd in Trafalgar Square, "One thing is clear—we're going to keep going until we win."

"It's not just for us. It's about all of you who care about a decent society. We must get Candy back in that building and we will do whatever it takes."

PCS general secretary Mark Serwotka added that the union would support the strikers in whatever action they decided to take.

He said, "This strike is absolutely critical. Our union will continue to support this strike in every way possible until our members believe they have

got an acceptable settlement.

"We don't just want the end of privatisation. We want Candy leading us back into work and striking a blow against the anti-union employers."

NUT union general secretary Christine Blower and Unite union assistant general

secretary Steve Turner also pledged support for the strikers and Candy. Incoming CWU union general secretary Dave Ward sent a message of support.

Speakers included filmmaker Ken Loach, Turner Prize-winning artist Mark Wallinger, former victimised

health worker Charlotte Monro, and London Metropolitan University and Barnet Council strikers.

Candy addressed the rally to loud cheers. She explained that resistance was needed to fight the Tories' attacks on trade unions.

Candy said, "We're not going to let them bully us. By sacking me we're not going to let them silence us."

"We have got to turn the tide—this government is coming for us."

### Scared

"But they are scared of us. So if they are scared of our protests, we need more protests. And if they are scared of our strikes, then we need more strikes."

Bosses are trying to claim the strike has no public support. But at the end of the rally supporters descended on the gallery's lobby chanting "Reinstate Candy Udwin" and then staged a sit down protest outside.

Solidarity events also took place in Edinburgh, Belfast, Hastings and Cardiff.

Find out how you can donate to the strike fund and support the workers at [ngnotforsale.wordpress.com](http://ngnotforsale.wordpress.com)

## Rotherham newspaper bosses target leading union militant Phil Turner

by NICK CLARK

**A LEADING activist in the NUJ journalists' union at the Rotherham Advertiser in South Yorkshire has been targeted for redundancy.**

Bosses singled out Phil Turner on Wednesday of last week following a selection process among the regional newspaper's 14 editorial staff.

Phil has worked at the Advertiser for some 30 years.

He has been the leading NUJ official for most of that time.

During that time he has



**Activists in Chesterfield hold solidarity signs**

proved himself to be a thorn in the side of bosses.

He led a successful strike against union derecognition in the 1990s and organised another strike over pay in 2002.

Advertiser bosses say they decided to make Phil redundant after comparing workers on a "skills matrix" agreed by the union.

But the NUJ denied that it agreed to the skills matrix.

The union said Phil was deliberately targeted in order to attack the union.

Workers at the Advertiser voted unanimously to strike

in defence of Phil at an emergency meeting on Wednesday of last week.

They are set to walk out on 11 June—on a deadline day for the weekly paper.

A protest will also be held in Rotherham town centre from 12 noon this Saturday.

Trade unionists across Britain have rushed to support Phil.

NUJ general secretary Michelle Stanistreet said, "It couldn't be clearer to Phil, his colleagues, and to the rest of the NUJ."

"A longstanding, effective and well-respected rep who has consistently stuck up

for his chapel and their collective principles has been deliberately targeted through this redundancy exercise.

"NUJ members at the Rotherham Advertiser aren't prepared to sit back and allow Phil to be picked off in this way."

"That's why they're taking industrial action—to support and stand by their rep."

Rush messages of support to [syorksnuj@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:syorksnuj@hotmail.co.uk). Messages of protest to: [nick.alexander@garnett-dickinson.co.uk](mailto:nick.alexander@garnett-dickinson.co.uk) and copy in [debbie.commander@garnett-dickinson.co.uk](mailto:debbie.commander@garnett-dickinson.co.uk) and Andrew. [Mosley@rotherhamadvertiser.co.uk](mailto:Mosley@rotherhamadvertiser.co.uk)